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# SAVEUR

*Savor a World of Authentic Cuisine*

**28**  
**DELICIOUS**  
**DONUT**  
**RECIPES**  
**TO TRY**  
**AT HOME**

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**SECRETS**  
**TO CHINA'S**  
**SPICIEST**  
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*the world's*

## BEST DONUTS

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**THE 50**  
**FINEST**  
**DONUT**  
**SHOPS IN**  
**AMERICA**

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**154**

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A close-up photograph of a hand holding a small brush, dusting powdered sugar onto a round, cream-topped bun. Several other similar buns are arranged on a surface in the background. A red banner with white text is overlaid across the middle of the image.

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# SAVEUR



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**Cover** Strawberry-Buttermilk "Fonut" and Donut with Chocolate Glaze PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL KRAUS

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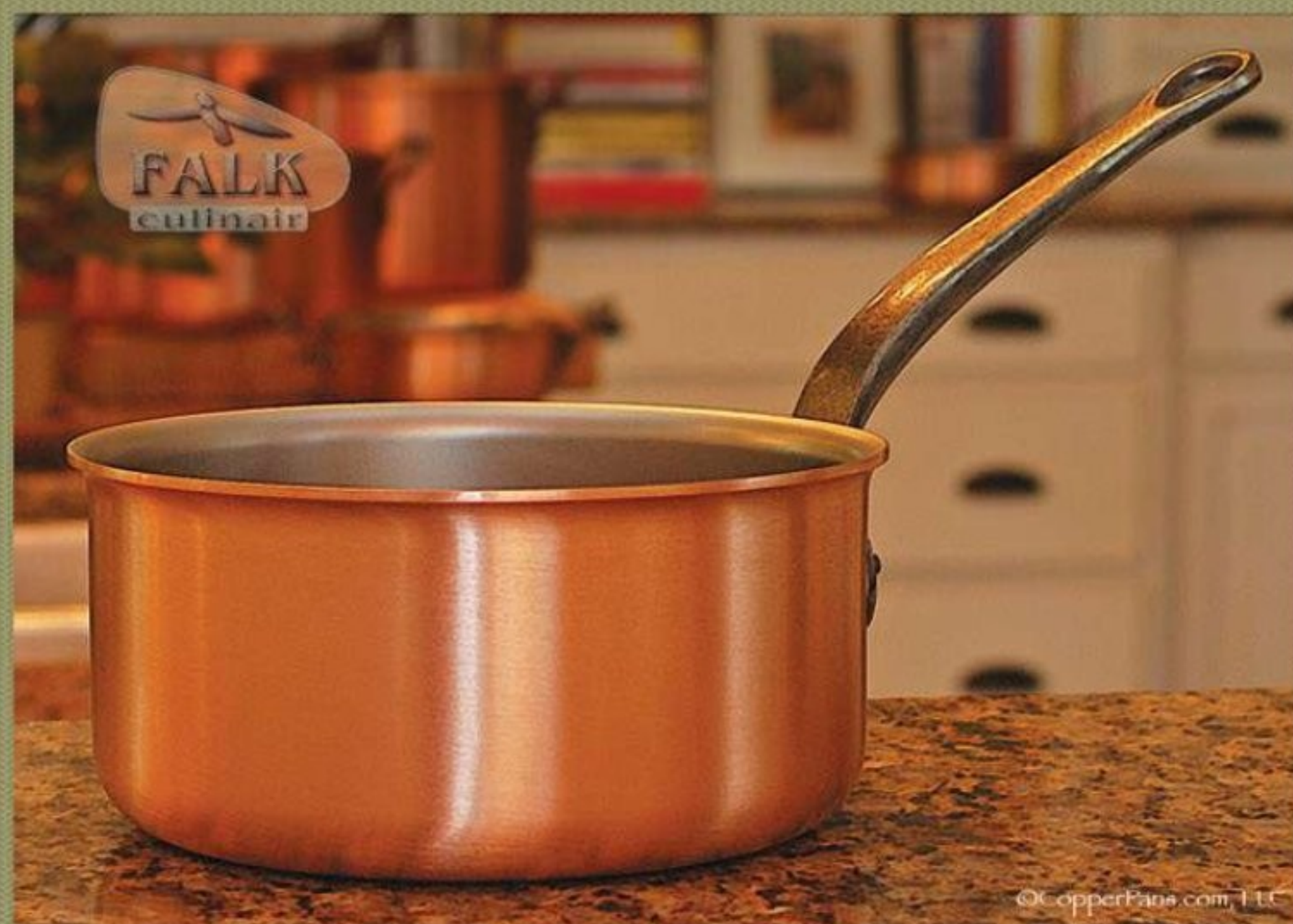
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# FIRST



## Destined for Donuts

Sometimes an obsession comes in handy

**T**HAT'S ME IN THE PICTURE: the little one on the right with her fingers in the frosting. I was a year old when this photo was taken; it ran with a story that was published in the Massachusetts newspaper the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*. The article was ostensibly about my mother Anna's catering business and her recent emigration from the U.S.S.R. (that's my well-behaved sister, Shulamit, between us). But it also turned out to be the first public record of my lifelong obsession with sweets.

Whatever chutzpah possessed me to manhandle that cake has still not forsaken me. Sweets are a fixation, a fact of life I once fought (influenced by the diet police, I suppose) but now embrace, and even use to my advantage. For instance, when it came time to edit our gargantuan donut feature ("Donut Planet," page 38), 27 pages of deep-fried recipes and lore, it was clear that I was the woman for the job.

Now, after months of contemplating the finer points of eggy crullers, dunkable cake

sinkers, jelly-filled *Berliners*, and hot, sticky Krispy Kremes, I'm still not sick of donuts. In fact, the more I learned about them, the more they mean to me. When I discovered, for example, that I share my birthplace with the very first Dunkin' Donuts franchise, which opened in Worcester in 1955, it reminded me of the time that my father, sister, and I scarfed down an illicit box of Dunkin' Donuts in a Worcester parking lot, hiding the evidence from my health-conscious mom.

But donuts have changed with the times, and today they don't have to be a guilty pleasure. Baked donuts made in ring-shaped tins, such as strawberry-buttermilk fonuts (see page 54 for a recipe), omit the frying altogether. And at my favorite shop, Doughnut Plant in New York City, they're made using organic ingredients, local fruit, and oil that is changed daily. They're so pristine, even my mother approves. —GABRIELLA GERSHENSON, Senior Editor



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**Hungry Channel** Ever wondered how to make the very best latkes? How about the tastiest fried chicken? In collaboration with the Hungry Channel, a new food-only site on YouTube, SAVEUR has created *Dueling Dishes*, a cooking competition that asks two very different chefs to take on one classic dish. To find out who wins, visit [youtube.com/user/TheOfficialHungry](http://youtube.com/user/TheOfficialHungry).





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# FARE

*Dispatches and Destinations From the World of Food, Plus Agenda and More*

**W**HEN I FIRST decided to visit South-Western Bathhouse and Tea Room, a *banya* (Russian for bathhouse) in the Toronto suburb of Mississauga, I fully anticipated the whacking I received with a bundle of birch branches in a sweltering 158-degree room. What I didn't expect was to be sitting in my bathrobe in an adjoining restaurant devouring some of the best Russian food I've ever tasted. But in Toronto, home to tens of thousands of Russian immigrants, *banyas* have long been known for their excellent Russian home-style cooking. Since opening their bathhouse last year, husband and wife Victor and Valentina Tourianski have fed customers like me such staples as *okroshka*, a cold soup made with radishes, cucumbers, bologna, and the fermented rye drink *kvass*; and *solyanka*, a meaty soup whose sweet and sour broth is flavored with pickles and capers. Patrons wash it all down with homemade *mors*, a chilled sweet-tart drink made of cranberries and sugar. So good is the food here that the Tourianskis have developed a following of customers who forgo the *banya* altogether and come just to eat. Valentina is beloved for her sour cream cakes known as *smetannik*, and layered honey tortes called *medovik*, and Victor is known for his garlicky borscht. While these foods are satisfying on their own, I've learned from experience that they're best enjoyed after a long hot steam, when they can be consumed with shriveled fingers, and a purified heart. —Leah Koenig



## Purifying Pleasures

In Toronto's Russian bathhouses, the food is best served steaming

*Okroshka*, a cold *kvass*-based soup, and *solyanka*, a sweet and sour soup (see page 14 for a recipe), at Toronto's South-Western Bathhouse



## Solyanka

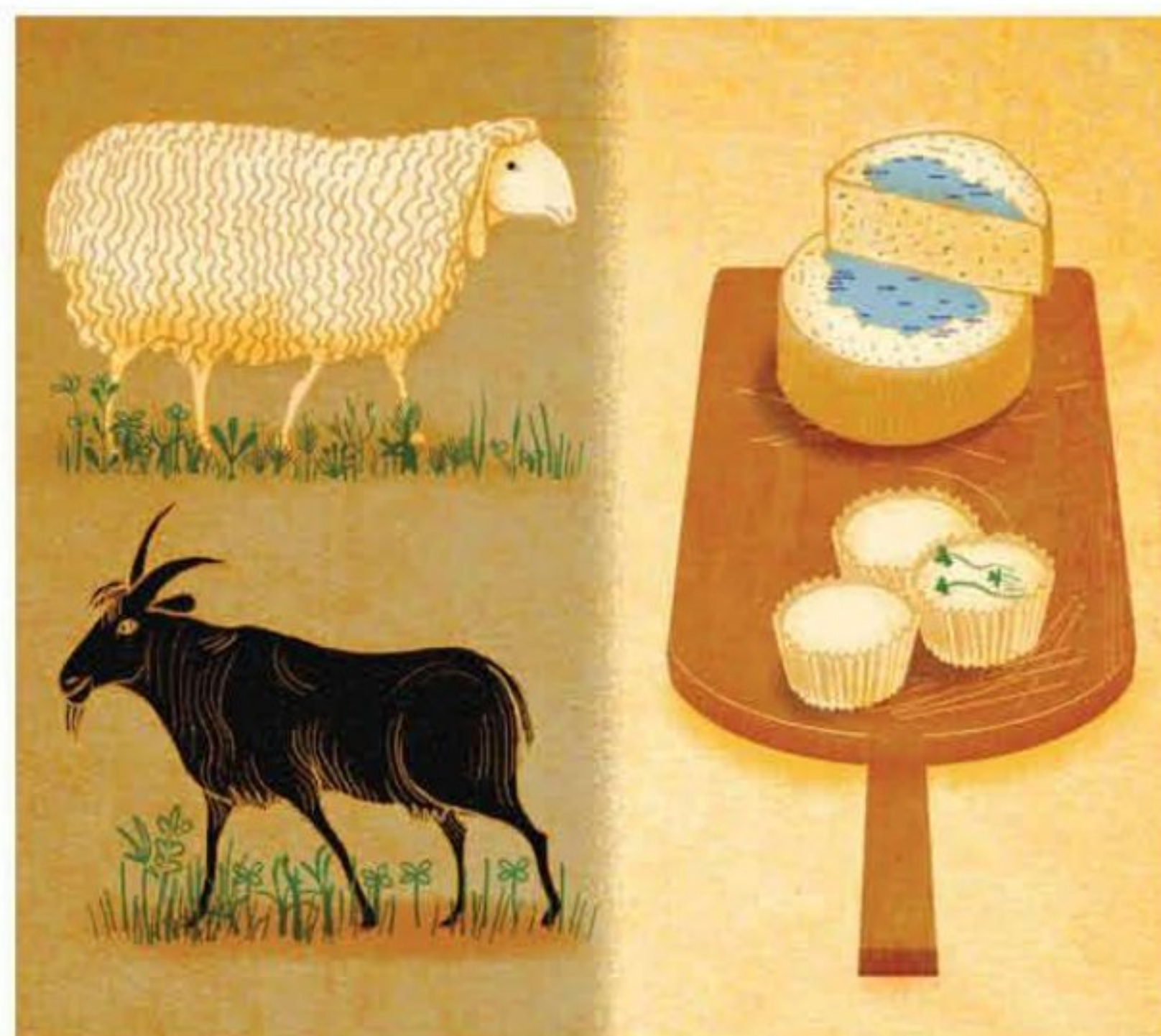
(Russian Sweet and Sour Beef Soup)

MAKES 10 CUPS

A mix of fresh and cured beef and pork gives this classic sweet and sour soup (pictured on [page 13](#)) heft.

- 1 lb. beef chuck, trimmed
- 8 oz. kielbasa sausage
- 4 oz. boneless ham steak
- 2 oz. hard salami
- 4 whole black peppercorns
- 3 whole allspice berries
- 1 bay leaf
- 4 oz. sliced bacon, minced
- 1 large yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 1 stalk celery, thinly sliced
- ¼ small head green cabbage, cored and thinly shredded
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 6 tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 15-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed
- 5 cups beef stock
- 1½ large dill pickles, chopped
- 1½ tbsp. capers, drained
- ¼ cup pitted black olives, sliced
- 1½ tbsp. sugar
- ½ lemon, thinly sliced
- Chopped parsley, sliced scallions, and sour cream, for serving

Cut beef, kielbasa, ham, and salami into ¼" pieces; set aside. Place peppercorns, allspice, and bay on a piece of cheesecloth and tie into a tight package; set aside. Heat bacon over medium-high heat in a 6-qt. saucepan; cook until crisp, 4–6 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to a bowl; set aside. Add meats to pot; cook until browned, 6–8 minutes. Add onion, celery, cabbage, and salt and pepper; cook until soft, 4–6 minutes. Stir in tomato paste; cook, until slightly caramelized, about 2 minutes. Return bacon to pot with spice package, tomatoes, and stock; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium, add pickles and capers; cook until beef is very tender, 40–45 minutes. Remove spice package. Stir in olives, sugar, lemon, and salt and pepper. Serve with parsley, scallions, and sour cream.



## Cheese to Cherish

On a Maltese island, a traditional delicacy endures

**W**INTERTIME is the rainy season on the tiny Maltese island of Gozo where I grew up. That's when the rolling hills and valleys of the craggy isle turn a bright, lush green, and where as a child, I spent many a winter day with my Aunt Lucia, milking the two sheep that resided in an outbuilding in her yard, then using that milk to make the freshest, most delicious cheese I've ever tasted. We would coagulate the milk with rennet for about 25 minutes, then spoon the creamy mass into cylindrical contain-

ers with screened bottoms that allowed the whey to drain away from the curds.

There wasn't much to the process, but because Aunt Lucia and I made it ourselves—and because its subtle, grassy flavor hinted at the verdure of our island—it was special.

In the evenings my mother and I would use the cheese to enhance all sorts of dishes. We stewed it with cauliflower and potatoes, or tossed it into a salad of seasonal vegetables alongside crusty bread and fruity olive oil. In preparation for summer, when the island turned arid and the sheep's hay diets made their milk less palatable, we would dry the cheese outside for a few days in homemade boxes screened with mosquito nets. In its dried form, it took on a more rustic flavor, one I always found pleasantly pungent and gamy. I

remember how we would grate it over minestrone soups and platters of Mediterranean antipasti, including the sun-dried tomatoes, olives, and capers my father would pickle himself. It was the only cheese we ever ate in my family, and we never grew tired of it.

We were not unique in this respect. For years the only way for those in rural Gozo to enjoy the pleasures of cheese was to make it themselves. And while the island is now home to modern supermarkets that stock dairy products from all four corners of the earth, people here hold on tight to their rustic traditions. They continue to keep sheep in their small yards or pastures, and to make the cheese, no longer out of necessity, but because it's delicious—so much so that it's considered a delicacy. It is often sold to specialty stores and local wine bars, where it is served in its dry form, pickled in vinegar and coated with black pepper.

Still, one of the most traditional dishes made with the

**W** Find a delicious recipe for Gozo cheese pie at [SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE154](http://SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE154)

cheese is eaten at home, a hearty pie studded with fresh green peas and made for special occasions and family gatherings. It's a recipe that is passed down through the generations here, and one that encapsulates the flavors of this beautiful island, where, I've come to understand, I spent a childhood more rare than most. —Victor Paul Borg



### One Good Bottle

## DARK BEAUTY

In 1997, beer enthusiast Don Feinberg wrangled some Belgian yeast from overseas pals and opened Brewery Ommegang in Cooperstown, New York. The Belgian-style brewery is now owned by Flanders-based Duvel Moortgat, and its seasonal release, **Art of Darkness (\$12.99/750 ml)**, is made with enough barley, wheat, and oats to put any Belgian tripel to shame. But despite its 8.9 percent alcohol content, it's a buoyant brew. A dose of dextrose helps the yeast carbonate the beer, and two fermentations—one in the tank and a second in the bottle—add even more effervescence. Light on the tongue and boasting malty bread, earth, and fennel flavors, which are balanced by herbal hops and black cherry-flavored yeast, it's a big but lithe companion for chocolate, cheesecake, and other rich sweets. —Betsy Andrews



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A vendor at Nishiki market specializing in pickled Japanese vegetables

Eat Street

## NISHIKI MARKET, KYOTO, JAPAN

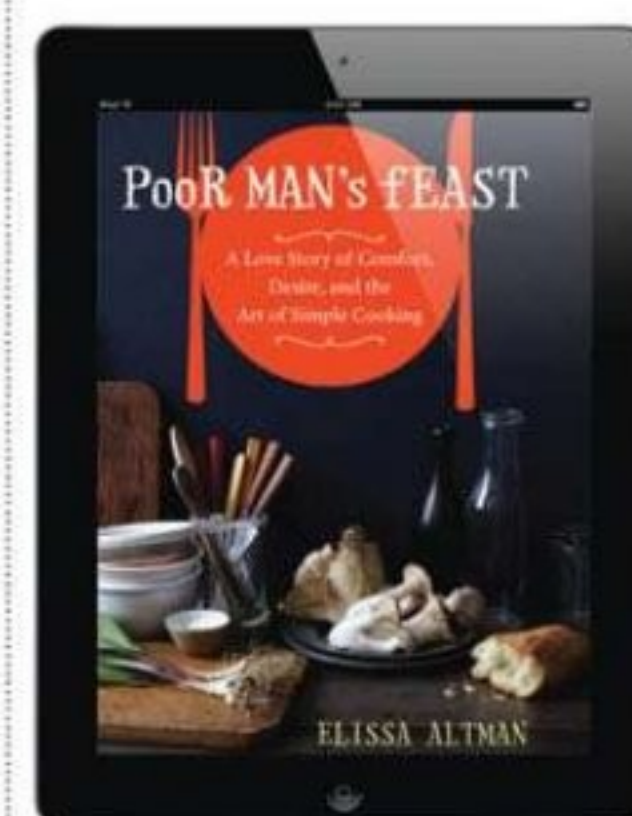
Sampling the multifaceted pleasures of Japan's culinary crown jewel

Though I've visited so many great food bazaars in Japan, for my money, the centuries-old Nishiki market, located in the old imperial capital of Kyoto, is the country's most picturesque. Within the six-block covered arcade, shopkeepers entice housewives in full kimono, local *kaiseki* chefs, and curious tourists with *katsuobushi* (dried bonito), freshly roasted green tea, and Kyoto-style confections. I, too, am tempted by everything here, but I have my favorites. On the outskirts of the market, I love to browse **Ichihara Heibei Shōten** (81/75/341-3831), a well-ordered boutique where thousands of chopsticks are organized by type of wood (cedar, bamboo, birch), use (eating, cooking), and style (seemingly infinite). And I've spent a small fortune on knives at **Aritsugu** (81/75/221-1091), a former samurai sword manufacturer that dates back to the 16th century. Their hand-hewn carbon-steel blades are suited to ultraspecific tasks such as cutting soba noodles or slicing tuna. When the thirst hits me, I drop by **Tsunoki Sake** (81/75/221-2441), where eighth-generation sake merchant Teruo Fujii facilitates collaborations between rice farmers and sake brewers that

culminate in unique flavor profiles such as creamy apple with hints of malt. Then I join the line at **Kon-Na Monja** (81/75/255-3231) for airy soy milk donuts eaten fresh from the fryer. For a more substantial bite, my choice is **Iyomata** (81/75/221-1405), run by a 20th generation vendor, who transforms fresh fish from the market into platters of beautifully arranged sushi, sashimi, and other delicacies. Afterward, I linger over the eye candy at **Kanematsu** (81/75/221-0088), a shop that exhibits premium produce the way Neil Lane displays diamonds: Outrageously plump wasabi roots recline in a lavish running-water bath, while pricey white strawberries luxuriate in custom jewel boxes. After perusing the bottom floor of the **Daimaru** department store (81/75/211-8111), where the food emporium is packed with soy sauces, endless platters of vegetable tempura, and, best of all, an entire mushroom department, I end my visit at nearby **Miki Keiran** (81/75/221-1585). Their delectable rolled egg-and-dashi omelettes are made by chefs who theatrically toss them high in their pans in a show of true culinary theater. —Nathalie Jordi

### Digital Feast

The memoir-with-recipes literary genre can occasionally incline toward the prosaic. Thankfully, in *Poor Man's Feast* (Chronicle, 2013), writer and *SAVEUR* contributor Elissa Altman offers a much-needed reboot of the formula. In a candid tale that's both tender and witty, the author tells stories of eating generously with her expansive and verbose New York Jewish family, one that includes a father who's literally moved to tears by a good sorrel sauce, and a cousin who thinks nothing of serving a pumpkin flan dusted with crushed candied violets as a Thanksgiving dessert. Simultaneously, Altman unravels her giddy story of falling in love with (and learning to cook for) her wife, Susan Turner, for whom *Larousse Gastronomique* is bedtime reading. These tales had their genesis in Altman's *Poor Man's Feast* blog. But here (and in the print edition), they're expanded and paired with recipes, such as her ramp frittata, that are as enticing and polished as her writing. —Helen Rosner





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## AGENDA

March 2013

March

1-3

### THE PASSION FOR FOOD FESTIVAL

Gothenburg, Sweden

Gothenburg's scenic seaport bustles with vendors serving local specialties such as venison from Sweden's inland forests and butter-poached brill and oysters from the North Sea. Fest goers can attend cooking classes, and watch "duels" between Michelin-starred chef Leif Mannerstrom and other top Scandinavian chefs. Info: passionformat.se

March

2

### F.O.O.D. (FOOD, OBJECTS, OBJECTIVES, AND DESIGN)

Charlotte, North Carolina

At Charlotte's Mint Museum, more than 300 food-related objects from around the world will be arranged in

captivating displays by Barcelona artist Antoni Miralda.

The exhibit, which runs through July 7,

includes iconic kitchen products from the past and present, kitchen-inspired sculpture (like tableware made with South Carolina's Geechie Boy Grits), digital food photography, and high-design kitchenware by Michael Graves and Philippe Starck, among others. Info: mintmuseum.org



March

25-31

### HOLY WEEK CELEBRATIONS

Campania, Italy

The week leading up to Easter Sunday is the most delicious time to visit the Campania region of Italy. Along with spectacular parades honoring *Addolorata* (the grieving Virgin Mary) and *Cristo Morto* (the deceased Christ), the street vendors of Naples, Sorrento, and neighboring towns offer seasonal specialties such as *casatiello*, an Easter bread crowned with dough crosses, while local bakeries sell *pastiera*, a traditional Easter ricotta cake. Info: italia.it

March

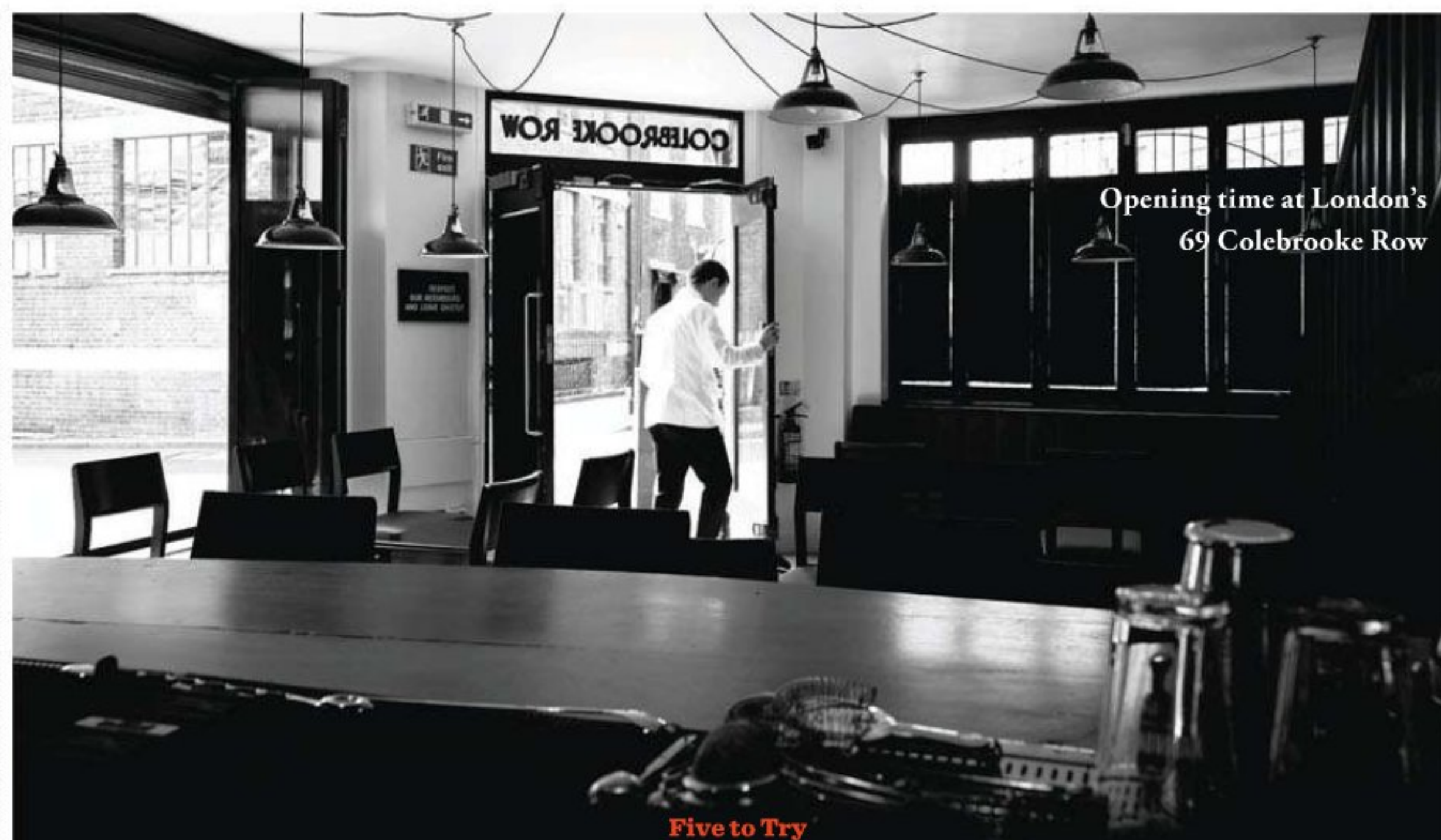
27

Birthday

### MICHAEL JACKSON

1942, Yorkshire, England

Known as "the Beer Hunter," the British-born writer Michael Jackson was the foremost authority on the malted beverage. Over his 30-year career, he helped elevate beer's status and revive interest in its artisanal traditions through classic tomes such as *The World Guide to Beer*—among the first books to categorize beers according to style and origin. Jackson passed away in 2007, but his influence lives on in the resurgence of craft brewing.



Opening time at London's 69 Colebrooke Row

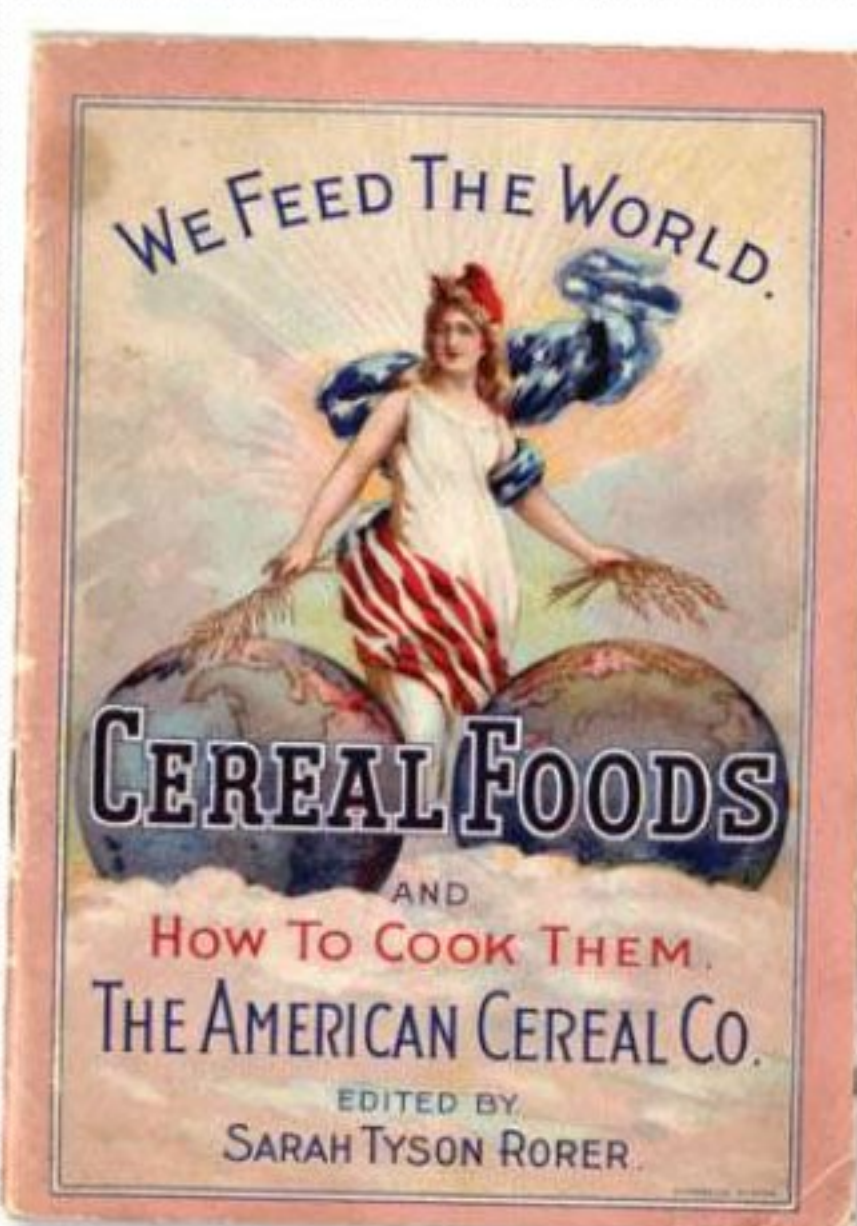
Five to Try

## LONDON BARS

From classic martinis to fruity punches, there are plenty of ways to stay jolly in London

**1 Duke's Bar at Duke's Hotel (dukeshotel.com)** A classic dry martini from this clubby watering hole will likely be among the best you've ever tasted. Head bartender Alessandro Palazzi has been elevating the libation to an art form since 1975, winning over such aficionados as James Bond series creator Ian Fleming, who was once a regular. A symphony of muted conversations, clinking ice cubes, and the rattle of a martini trolley pushed by a white-jacketed bartender adds to the ambiance. **2 Bassoon Bar at the Corinthia Hotel (bassoonbar.co.uk)** With its 1920s art deco interior, this lavish candlelit lounge features era-appropriate live jazz and fresh takes on classic British cocktails, including a Pimm's Cup made with fresh homemade lemonade, and an English Tea Punch, a blend of gin and white vermouth infused with lavender, mint, elderflower cordial, and jasmine tea. **3 Artesian Bar at the Langham Hotel (artesian-bar.co.uk)** In a gorgeous barroom with an Orient-meets-Occident décor, head bartender Simone Caporali pours

ingenious rum cocktails, including the namesake Artesian Punch, a fruity blend of Pampero Aniversario dark rum, Calvados, pear brandy, and freshly squeezed pineapple juice. Drinks here all feature whimsical garnishes, such as miniature alligator heads. **4 69 Colebrooke Row (69colebrookerow.com)** This spirited Islington venue serves some of London's most culinary cocktails, such as a twist on the bellini made with a purée of dried apples, dry cider, apple juice, and hay topped with Prosecco, and a Woodland Martini dashed with maple, cedar, and sequoia bitters. The always crowded barroom boasts an Italian film noir décor, complete with vintage Campari posters. **5 Coburg Bar at the Connaught Hotel (the-connaught.co.uk)** With its wood-paneled walls, wingback chairs, and blazing fireplace, this Mayfair bar is an ideal setting for a London nightcap. Try the White Lady, a classic British tippie made with gin and equal parts lemon juice and Cointreau, shaken then strained—a perfect way to say cheerio and good night. —Ceil Miller Bouchet



## Food Lover's Library

My understanding of American culinary history was turned on its head after visiting the Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive. It was there I learned how Jewish American cookery was once celebrated more for okra-based gumbos than matzo ball soups, and how, back in George Washington's day, the apples in apple pie were often substituted with, oddly enough, peas. Located inside the University of Michigan's William L. Clements Library in Ann Arbor, the collection is home to more than 20,000 items, including cookbooks dating back to the 1500s, early Chez Panisse menus, vintage advertisements, even an 1888 Manhattan saloon map. Its origins date back to the 1970s, when Jan Longone started amassing culinary ephemera for a mail-order bookshop she ran out of her house—a business that counted Julia Child and Craig Claiborne among its customers. Jan and her husband, Dan, donated their bounty to the university in 2000. Valuable as it is, Longone, who still curates the archive, remains its greatest asset, a woman whom James Beard once credited as having "codified American culinary history." —Steve Friess

An 1899 cookbook from the American Cereal Company at the University of Michigan's Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY 69 COLEBROOKE ROW; COURTESY JANICE BLUESTEIN LONGONE CULINARY ARCHIVE; MOLDED GRAPE LEAF TEAPOT, CIRCA 1745-1749, STONEWARE DELHOM COLLECTION, COURTESY MINT MUSEUM.



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# Devouring the Delta

Celebrating a region's storied culture and cuisine

**I**T'S AROUND 250 MILES from the smoky pork barbecue joints of Memphis to the elegant antebellum mansion restaurants of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Traveling between them will take you through a haunting 4 million-acre expanse of raggedy floodplain that lies between the Mississippi and Yazoo rivers, and is known simply as the Delta. In *Eat Drink Delta: A Hungry Traveler's Journey Through the Soul of the South* (University of Georgia Press, 2013), former *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* food editor and Mississippi native Susan Puckett has penned a paean to her homeland in the form of a combination cookbook and culinary travelogue packed with recipes, restaurant profiles, and endearing anecdotes. Think of it as your road trip companion through a bountiful land of catfish ponds and tamale stands, rundown juke joints and country cafés serving up lemon icebox pies and slow-cooked greens. It's a book that, if used properly, will wind up tattered and dog-eared in your glove compartment, its pages stained with grease from the fried okra you ordered at the Blue Levee restaurant in Rosedale, a watermark from the Rhett Butler cocktail you savored at Vicksburg's Cedar Grove Mansion Inn (see a recipe at right), and a spatter of gravy from the chicken and dumplings you downed at a gas station café in the casino resort community of Tunica, where diners still accompany their meals with glasses of ice-cold buttermilk. While guiding you through the region's restaurants, Puckett delivers odes to Delta-made delicacies ranging from pork cracklins to Kool-Aid-marinated pickles, as well as dozens of intriguing recipes, some sourced from Mississippi icons—Craig Claiborne's mom's hotcakes with orange syrup; the late writer Shelby Foote's foolproof cornbread, which made my Brooklyn kitchen smell like a Delta diner when I baked it up in a cast-iron skillet on a recent afternoon. Along the way Puckett

meditates on the area's most celebrated traditions—its barbecue and blues clubs, its meat-and-three-dishes, and the caramel cakes and other life-affirming foods typically served at funerals. In addition to Puckett's evocative writing, the book's regional character is fortified by Mississippian Langdon Clay's faded photographs, which appear like 1970s tapered-edge snapshots throughout the book. Together these two Deltaphiles have created a keeper of a book—one that inspires exploration both in the kitchen and on the road. —Keith Pandolfi

## RHETT BUTLER COCKTAIL

MAKES 1 COCKTAIL

This sweet blend of liqueur and fruit juices is served at Cedar Grove Mansion Inn in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

- 2 oz. Southern Comfort liqueur
- ½ oz. sweet vermouth
- ½ oz. simple syrup
- ½ oz. fresh lemon juice
- Club soda, for topping
- ½ oz. pineapple juice
- Lemon slice and maraschino cherry, for garnish

Combine liqueur, vermouth, syrup, and lemon juice in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake for 30 seconds, and strain into a chilled old-fashioned glass filled with fresh ice. Top with soda and pineapple juice; garnish with lemon slice and cherry.



TODD COLEMAN (2)

35TH ANNUAL

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THE PANTRY, page 92: Info on buying Ommegang beer, and more.



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# ROUTES



## Mill Town Meals

The Massachusetts city of Fall River boasts uncommon—and uncommonly good—regional foods

BY JANE AND MICHAEL STERN

**W**E HIT THE ROAD A LOT for food. But we consider ourselves lucky when we are at home, as we live just a morning's drive from Fall River. Though the old mill city is in southeastern Massachusetts along Mount Hope Bay, eating there is like eating in a foreign country. Half the population is Portuguese-American, the descendants of 19th-century mill workers, plus many late-20th-century arrivals, and the Portuguese food is outstanding. But beyond that cuisine's classic kale soup and *bacalhau assado* (roasted salt cod), the city's tables abound with dishes found nowhere else in America—some of them exist nowhere else in the world. The erstwhile textile center of the nation—and home of Lizzie Borden, notoriously acquitted of the 1892 ax murders of

SAVEUR contributing editors JANE and MICHAEL STERN are the authors of *Road food.com*.

her father and stepmother—is a gold mine for unique regional foods.

On menus, not all the vernacular specialties seem unusual. Hot cheese—ho hum, right? No way. The hot cheese sandwich found at diners here is a pungent gem of grated sharp cheddar typically served not quite melted for a texture resembling soft scrambled eggs. At J.J.'s Coney Island, a polite weenie joint (management forbids swearing), the molten cheese assumes a buttery luxe when topped with the chili meat sauce used on the Coney Island hot dog.

That chili dog variant is found in places from southeastern Massachusetts to the Pacific Coast. In the hot dog shops of Fall River, as in those of neighboring Rhode Island, the meat sauce tends to be more significant than the dog itself. Across the street from J.J.'s, at Nick's Original Coney Island Hot Dogs, the beefy chili makes magic when combined with crisp raw onions and a squirt of yellow mustard atop

a frank in a fluffy bun. If you doubt the sway of this transcendent sandwich, observe the large number of customers who take advantage of Nick's "Buy 5, Get 1 Free" offer.

A sign on Nick's window advertises CHOURIÇO, pronounced "shore-ee-se" and served grilled, sliced, and piled in a bun. Although the smoky, garlicky Portuguese sausage doesn't want for cheese or Coney sauce, that's frequently the way people get it at Nick's, and it is common to include french fries in the bun. Called "chips," thanks to late-1800s British Isles immigrants, the fries are a Nick's specialty. Whole spuds cut to order are put into an age-burnished Autofry machine that spits them out sizzling hot.

Above, from left: Regina Mark, an owner at Mee Sum Restaurant and Cocktail Lounge, with a chow mein sandwich; shrimp Mozambique (see [page 24](#) for a recipe).

FROM LEFT: CHELSEA POMALES; TODD COLEMAN



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- carole42

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Another UK contribution can be had at Hartley's Original Pork Pies, a take-out shop whose individual deep-dish pies were designed when the shop opened in 1900 for a handheld midshift lunch at the mill. Hartley's also makes French meat pies (a beef, pork, and mashed potato medley influenced by the *tourtière* of the French Canadians who came here about the same time as the Brits), Friday–Saturday salmon pies for the city's large Catholic population, and chouriço pies. Proprietor Allen Johnson, who bought the place from the Hartleys 40 years ago, often arrives at 3 A.M. to roll out dough (made with lard) and press it into English-made tins. The pork pie filling consists of nothing more than ground pork, salt, and pepper; although gravy is available, the one–two punch of moist, savory meat and flaky crust needs no condiment.

As good as these out-of-hand meals are, it's not all quick eats in Fall River; the 97-year-old Liberal Club is no hot dog joint. It is a social club and function hall. Regulars come



for shots and beers in its dark taproom, and couples linger on Saturday nights over highballs, prime rib, and fried lobster tails in a dining room outfitted with Red Sox memorabilia. The menu offers chouriço, as well as “chouriço meat”: thin slices of marinated pork loin, juicy and fragrant. Other Portuguese-American standouts include conch salad, shrimp Mozambique in a judiciously spiced, garlicky sauce (see a recipe at right), and grilled beef tenderloin topped with a fried egg and pickled cayenne peppers. When appetizers arrive—crunchy fried smelts and big chouriço-stuffed quahog clams—the waitress asks if you want oil and vinegar to go with them. “You do!” she said the first time we ate here and looked puzzled by the apparently mundane offer. Out came a gravy boat of marinade so crowded with herbs, minced garlic, and chopped green onion that each spoonful was a savory bouquet delicious enough to spread on dinner rolls.

For dessert? While you can find plenty of nice regular donuts in Fall River, why would you want one if you can have a freshly made malassada? To produce this airy Por-

tuguese fritter, the sweet dough is stretched fairly flat, fried until golden brown, then liberally dusted with granulated sugar. With an espresso at Barcelos Bakery, it's heaven. Known as the place Emeril Lagasse started his culinary career washing dishes, Barcelos turns out a full inventory of Portuguese baked goods: sweet breads, custard pies, cod fritters, and *pasteis de feijao*, aka bean cakes, made here with caramel sauce and puréed red kidney beans. It is not easy to explain a bean cake, but if you can imagine a chewy tart that is just this side of sweet and also protein-rich, there you have it.

The city's most singular dish, however, is of a different origin altogether. “Have you had our Fall River chow mein before?” asks the waitress at Mee Sum Restaurant and Cocktail Lounge, a 60-something Chinese place on the south end of town. It's a question she needs to ask because of the two things that make this chow mein unique: the way it is served, which is on a burger bun, and the goodness of its noodles. Thin and elegant, fried until wicked crisp, those noodles are an ideal foil for brown gravy laced with celery and onion. The sandwich is a fascinating textural swirl: soft and crunchy, wet and brittle. It became Fall River's favorite 5-cent meal in the late 1920s, shortly after the local Oriental Chow Mein Company began distributing its one-of-a-kind noodles to the city's Chinese restaurants. For those who want to try it at home, the company has sold its Original Hoo Mee Chow Mein Mix for nearly as long as it's been in business.

It makes sense to eat the sandwich with a knife and fork. But some locals get theirs wrapped tight in wax paper; in the heat, the noodles soften, approaching the consistency of lo mein, and the gravy binds the whole thing together. Eaten this way, Fall River chow mein is mischievously delicious, a high-water mark of ersatz Cantonese cuisine that—except as an oddity at the New York hot dog house Nathan's of Coney Island—is little known anywhere else.

Devotees feared the chow mein sandwich might go extinct in 2009 after a fire knocked the local Asian noodle factory out of commission for six months. Regina Mark, who runs Mee Sum with her husband, Kenny, told us that after the blaze, Chinese restaurants around town sought replacement noodles from New York and Boston, but none were close to the Fall River standard. So the Marks started making their own. “People were coming in for ten and twenty pounds,” Regina said. “They were calling from Florida and Virginia to have them shipped. We hardly were a restaurant any-

more. We were becoming a noodle shop! But we had so many customers who wanted—who needed—chow mein, and there was nowhere else to get it.” She added, unnecessarily in this town of idiosyncratic delights, “Not Fall River chow mein, that's for certain.”

**Barcelos Bakery** 695 Bedford Street (508/676-8661; [barcelosbakery.com](http://barcelosbakery.com)). **Hartley's Original Pork Pies** 1729 S. Main Street (508/676-8605). **J.J.'s Coney Island** 565 S. Main Street (508/679-7944). **The Liberal Club** 20 Star Street (508/675-7115; [theliberalclub.com](http://theliberalclub.com)). **Mee Sum Restaurant and Cocktail Lounge** 1819 S. Main Street (508/678-9869). **Nick's Original Coney Island Hot Dogs** 534 S. Main Street (508/677-3890; [nicksconesauce.com](http://nicksconesauce.com)).

## Shrimp Mozambique

SERVES 4

This spicy shrimp dish (pictured on [page 22](#)), a Portuguese classic named for its former African colony, is served at the Liberal Club in Fall River, Massachusetts, with french fries and rice or pasta.

- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 lb. jumbo shrimp, peeled and deveined, tails left intact
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tsp. ground annatto (see [page 92](#))
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 12 oz. beer, preferably lager
- 8 tbsp. hot sauce, preferably Frank's Red Hot
- Chopped parsley, for garnish
- Lemon wedges, to serve
- Cooked rice, to serve (optional)

Melt 2 tbsp. butter in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Season shrimp with salt and pepper. Working in 2 batches, add shrimp and cook, turning once, until just pink, about 2 minutes; transfer to a bowl and set aside. Heat remaining butter in skillet. Add onions and garlic; cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 6 minutes. Stir in annatto, coriander, cumin, and oregano and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add beer and bring to a boil; cook, until reduced by half, 8–10 minutes. Stir in hot sauce and cook until sauce is slightly thick, about 4 minutes. Add reserved shrimp and cook until warmed through, 2–3 minutes more. Season with salt and pepper; garnish with parsley and serve with lemon wedges over rice, if you like.



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# SOURCE



## Fruit Forward

Vermont cider syrup is the essence of apples

BY HELEN ROSNER

**W**HEN I FIRST ENCOUNTERED Wood's Boiled Cider drizzled atop fresh-baked biscuits during breakfast at a friend's house in New England, I figured it must be maple syrup. But the taste revealed something entirely unexpected: a dense, concentrated nectar evocative of dried figs, rich lager, autumn leaves, and apples—thousands of apples.

Made once a year on the Weathersfield, Vermont, farm that's been in Willis Wood's family since 1798, the recipe for this one-ingredient wonder has remained the same for centuries: Fresh apples—mostly McIntosh for a good balance of sweet and tart—are juiced on the screw-cranks press that's done the job since the late 1800s. The resulting cider is run through a wood-fired flue pan, the same kind of equipment used to concentrate maple sap into syrup. For every ten gallons Wood pours in, nine are lost to evaporation, and what remains is thick, delicious boiled cider. After cooling, the precious elixir goes straight into a glass bottle and is sealed in; nothing is added, and nothing but water is taken away. The result is a foodstuff that is the essence of New England, and of apples themselves.

Its complex flavor—sharp and rich all at once—makes boiled cider an exceptional sweetener; once a homegrown alternative to imported sugars and molasses, it was a staple of the preindustrial Northeast. Yet by the time Wood and his wife, Tina, took over the farm in 1970, the demand for it had slowed to a trickle. For a while, most of their customers were hardy octogenarian Vermonters still making their mothers' pre-Depression recipes for mincemeat filling, applesauce, and boiled-cider pie. Nowadays a renewed interest in local and heritage foods is bringing boiled cider back into pantries in New England and beyond. At home I use it for sweetening cakes and pies, glazing tarts, and brightening gravies. When brushed with equal parts fiery mustard on a pork roast, it adds mouthwatering vibrancy. But my all-time favorite way to use it is simply to stir a tablespoon or two into a

mug of boiled water for a cider tea that beats regular hot cider for both nuance and depth. A one-pint bottle costs \$8 at [woodscidermill.com](http://woodscidermill.com). 

TODD COLEMAN





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# ESSAY



## Where Cubans Cook

A photographic journey through the kitchens of Havana

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELLEN SILVERMAN

**F**OR THE PAST TWO YEARS I've been taking photographs of the kitchens of Havana, Cuba. I started almost accidentally. On a visit to the island in December of 2010, I met a Cuban photographer named Carlos Otero Blanco. We discovered that we shared a passion for interiors—Carlos had recently self-published a book of photographs of bedrooms from all over Cuba, and I'd started shooting kitchens in New York. For each of us, these rooms had a certain pull and charisma. We decided to try taking pictures of kitchens in Havana—a spontaneous shared undertaking that turned into an ongoing solitary project.

Each morning during my visits, I walk the city's streets, wandering

into the courtyards of once grand buildings and knock on doors at random, never knowing what I'll find when people open their doors. Some apartments open onto large, airy kitchens; in many, the kitchens are barely there. In one building I saw a hallway in which a table holding a two-burner gas cooktop and a cutting board created a kitchen where there had been none.

What start out as tentative conversations with the inhabitants often turn into absorbing encounters. One morning I stopped to

ELLEN SILVERMAN is a New York City-based photographer.






From left: the kitchen at El Ojo del Ciclón, an art gallery in Old Havana; a 1920s-era kitchen in the Vedado neighborhood of Havana



talk to a woman as she was entering her house. After protesting that her kitchen was not worthy of a photograph, she waved me in. I walked into a space full of life and color, with paint and brushes laid out on the dining table and coffee brewing on the stove. She and her husband were painters, and I lingered for hours over a bottle of wine, talking with them about art. On another day, wandering near the Malecón—the broad esplanade that runs along the harbor—I entered a building and walked up five narrow flights of stairs, knocking on doors as I went. No one admitted me. At last I reached an apartment occupied by two sisters in their 80s, Gertrudis and Elena, who had been living there on the fifth floor for more than 50 years. They were delighted by my mission and graciously allowed me to shoot the tiny tile-walled nook where they cooked together.

I was at first drawn to the graphic simplicity of the Havana kitchens—the bold hues and clean, empty surfaces. It was only after returning several times that I started noticing how there was a dis-

tinct lack of food on the counters in this country where the basics have long been scarce, and how much of the richness of the spaces came, paradoxically, from wear: The rooms were furnished with old things, frayed things, things in constant use. But I also noticed how each kitchen told the story of those who lived there. Even in the photographs without people in them, the spaces conveyed their presence: You can see how someone had lavished attention on an arrangement of plates, how they had set a table for lunch, or how a little plastic flower was positioned just so—how someone had worked to make things pretty or put things in place. And however minimal the kitchen, each one was equipped with essentials: a pressure cooker in which beans were bubbling, a small stove-top coffeepot, and a gas cooktop—sometimes with a pot of rice simmering on top of it. These kitchens might be spare, but they're beautiful—and, I think, vital emblems of those who live, and cook, within them. 





Clockwise from top right: a table set for lunch in a second-story kitchen in the Vedado neighborhood; the kitchen of sisters Gertrudis and Elena; Alberto López Padrón, a musician, in his apartment one block from the Malecón







CLASSIC

## Deep Dish

In Alsace, France, local breadmakers' ovens yield a luscious stew

BY SOPHIE BRICKMAN

**S**OPHIE!" CHEF ANDRÉ SOLTNER put the accent on the second syllable as he greeted me at the door of my alma mater, the International Culinary Center in Manhattan. I had come there so he could teach me how to make *bachefoe*, a medley of pork, beef, lamb, and vegetables simmered in wine in a ceramic pot that's sealed with a band of dough to prevent juices from escaping.

I had recently moved back to New York from warmer climes. The city felt cold; there

was a chill in the air that made me long for comfort: a warming stew, a day with a beloved mentor. I figured I might as well combine the two. I had heard about, but never eaten, *bachefoe*, a delicious-sounding stew that Soltner, the school's Alsatian-born dean, has been making since he was a child in Thann in northeastern France. So I asked him if could apprentice myself to him for a day. After informing me that I'd have to supply the proper crockery, as well as mari-

nated meats, which he insisted include pigs' feet and "at least one tail," he accepted.

And so, ever the student, I dutifully lugged a heavy terrine and a bag of marinated meats through the streets and met my old dean. Soltner, the former chef-owner of the legendary Manhattan restaurant Lutèce, ushered me inside to a corner of a kitchen where students were prepping for class. I plunked down my parcels, and we headed to the fridge, where he spooned out some-



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And this

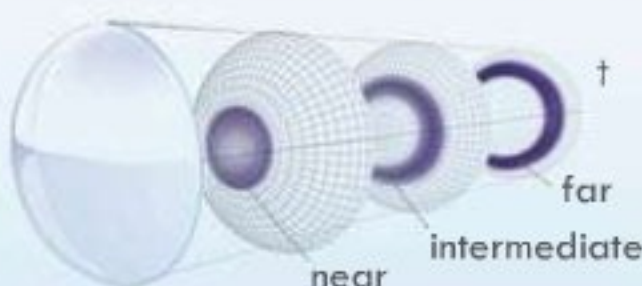
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thing thick and white. I arched an eyebrow.

He grinned, "Goose fat!" A coating for the pot and lid, the fat was purely for flavor, a lavish yet elemental touch typifying the cooking of Alsace. The region was passed between Germany and France four times since the fall of the Holy Roman Empire; its food is an amalgam of the two countries: Teutonic practicality mixed with a dash of Gallic refinement, expressed in dishes like choucroute, that famed braise of sauerkraut, sausages, and pork that looks plain but tastes magnificent.

In that respect, *batcheoffe* (also spelled *baeckeooffe*, *backenoff*, or *baekaoffa*, according to dialect) is Alsatian through and through. It's an improvised meal of odds and ends that cooks for hours at low heat while you go about your business and emerges from the oven with enormous flavor.

According to the French culinary bible, *Larousse Gastronomique*, on Monday washdays in Alsace, women would take a filled terrine to the baker, who would cook the *batcheoffe* in the residual heat of the oven—the dish's

## **Batcheoffe is stick-to-your-ribs food, the broth thick, the taste deeply savory, the aroma heavy with wine and rich meat**

name means, literally, "baker's oven"—to be retrieved post-laundry. When I mentioned this to another Alsatian-born chef, Jean-Georges Vongerichten, he told me of a variation on the tradition: In Illkirch-Graffenstaden where he grew up, he would drop off his mother's *batcheoffe* on Sundays before church and retrieve it after services. As I was instructed by Soltner to do, Mère Vongerichten marinated her meats overnight in a crisp Alsatian wine, which flavored and tenderized the cuts.

In the ICC kitchen, the dish proved easy enough to construct. After I sliced potatoes, onions, and carrots, Soltner greased the pot with the fat and layered potatoes on the bottom. He piled the meat and vegetables on top, then plunged the pigs' feet and tail in, so that their cartilage would melt and, deliciously, thicken the stew. Another layer of potatoes sandwiched the meat. Then he added a final flourish: slices of bacon latticed over the top.

"This isn't traditional," the chef said with a wink, "but why not?"

He covered everything with a dry white wine, sealed the lid with a dough rope rolled from a quick flour-water paste, then placed the stew in the oven where it would cook for three hours, its savory, aromatic flavors meld-

ing inside the heavy terrine. That pot, which I ordered online to approximate one from the town of Soufflenheim, may be the most Alsatian aspect of the dish. Soufflenheim has been connected to pottery since the Bronze Age, and workshops there continue the tradition by making *batcheoffe* terrines. Like the dish itself, the glazed and ornately painted covered casseroles are unique to the region.

"Batcheoffe is even more Alsatian than choucroute," Soltner told me. "There is nothing like *batcheoffe* in other places, but versions of sauerkraut you find all over."


If *batcheoffe* remains lesser known than the iconic choucroute, that may be due to its relative youth. As cookbook author Sue Style notes in *A Taste of Alsace* (Hearst Books, 1990), potatoes didn't become a regular part of the regional diet until the early 1800s, so *batcheoffe* doesn't appear in the earliest Alsatian cookbook, *La Cuisinière du Haut-Rhin*, published in 1842. When I reached Style at her home in Alsace, she speculated that the dish came of age only in the mid-19th century.

Soltner and I retreated to his office to watch a YouTube clip from a 1994 episode of Julia Child's television series *Cooking with Master Chefs*, in which Soltner cooked *batcheoffe*. The chef, smiling, nodded in agreement as his screen self cut through the dough seal and, inhaling, remarked, "It smells beautiful."

Back in the classroom, students were circling like vultures, lured by that same aroma. Soltner pulled the terrine from the oven and popped off the lid. His *batcheoffe* was homey, stick-to-your-ribs food, the broth thick, the taste deeply savory, the fragrance heavy with wine and rich meat. I had to try making it at home. But since finding pigs' tails had proved difficult to begin with, I called Vongerichten and another chef from Alsace, Hubert Keller of the San Francisco restaurant Fleur de Lys, and asked them for their recipes, hoping for something simpler. Keller told me that his stew includes the trotters but not the tails, and its flavor is sharpened with juniper berries. The differences between his rendition and Soltner's call to question the notion of tradition when making a dish that is derived from whatever a matriarch had in the larder in the not-too-distant past.

"You can be really flexible with this dish," Keller assured me.

I decided to riff off a version Vongerichten suggested: just diced lamb and vegetables simmered in wine until tender. At the last minute I wanted to add some bacon as a nod to Soltner, but all I had in the fridge were a few slices of prosciutto, so I shingled them on top. As the dish cooked, instead of summoning my

inner Alsatian and doing much-needed laundry, I took a nap. When I woke, the house was filled with the inviting smell of wine and stewing onions, an aroma that has filled Alsatian houses for centuries. I scooped out a steaming bowlful. The lamb was tender, the potatoes buttery, the broth potent, and the prosciutto crisp and salty. Just like that, I had added my own version of *batcheoffe* to my repertoire of winter stews. 

## **✶ BACHEOFFE**

(*Alsation Meat and Vegetable Stew*)

SERVES 6

This wine-simmered Alsatian dish of meat and vegetables is cooked in a dough-sealed pot.

- 1 lb. boneless beef chuck, trimmed and cut into 1½" pieces
- 1 lb. boneless pork shoulder, trimmed and cut into 1½" pieces
- 1 lb. boneless lamb shoulder, trimmed and cut into 1½" pieces
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 3 cups dry white wine
- ¼ cup parsley leaves, finely chopped
- 2 tsp. juniper berries
- 5 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 medium carrots, thinly sliced
- 2 medium yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 2 small leeks, trimmed and thinly sliced
- 2 sprigs thyme
- ¼ cup duck or goose fat (optional)
- 3 lb. Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 1 lb. thick-cut bacon
- 1 cup flour, plus more for dusting

**1** Place beef, pork, and lamb in a bowl; season with salt and pepper. Add wine, parsley, juniper berries, garlic, bay, carrots, onions, leeks, and thyme; mix together, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight or up to 2 days.

**2** Heat oven to 350°. Rub a 10-qt. Dutch oven with duck fat, if using. Layer potatoes, marinated meat, and vegetables in the pot, seasoning between each layer with salt and pepper, ending with a layer of potatoes. Pour in remaining marinade and arrange the bacon, overlapping the slices slightly, over the top.

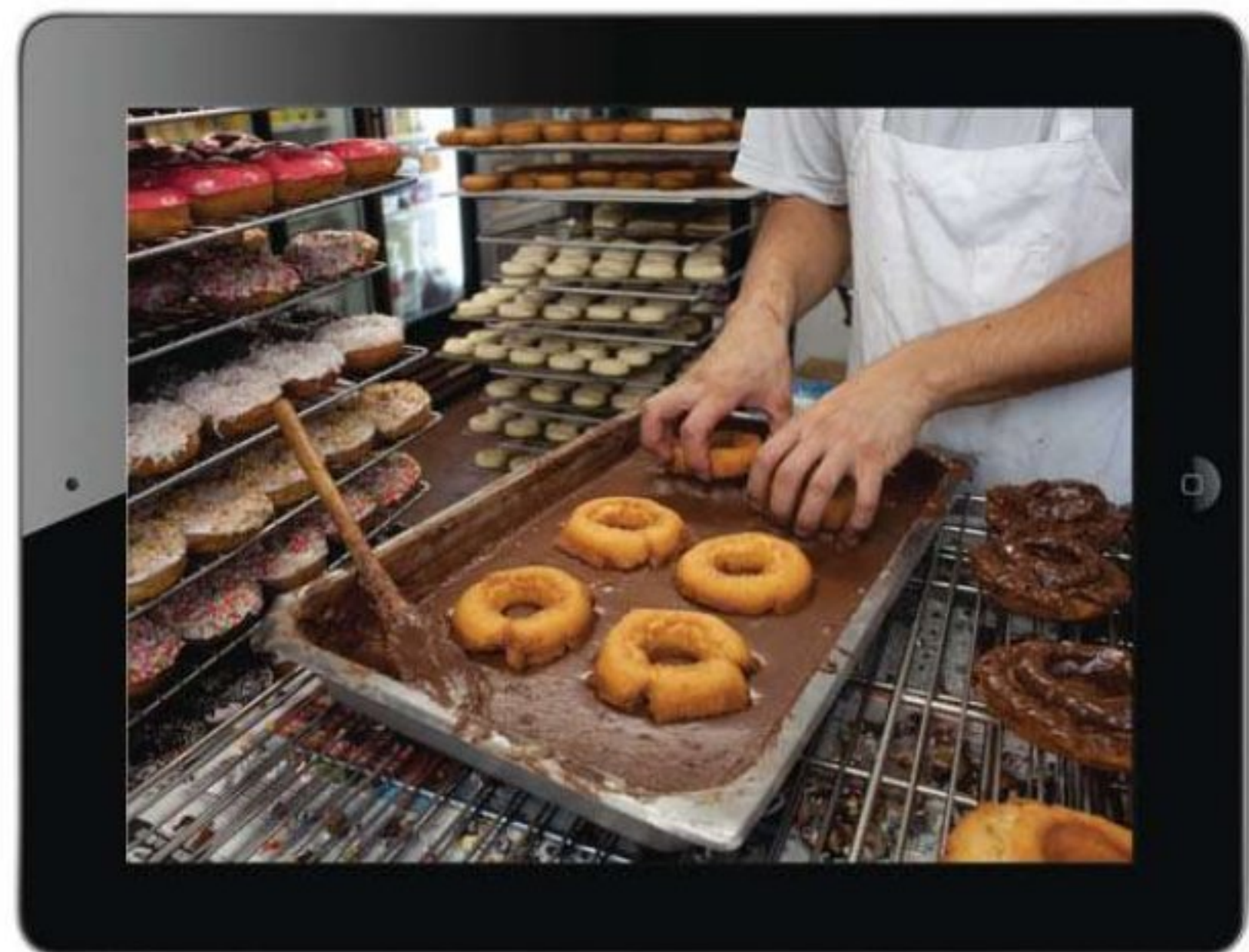
**3** Mix flour and 5 tbsp. water in a bowl; transfer to a floured surface and knead briefly. Roll dough into a rope and transfer to rim of pot; press to adhere and cover with lid. Bake 3½ hours. Using a paring knife, carefully break the seal and remove lid to serve.



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**FARM** One of the most unique products grown on O'ahu is sea asparagus, also known as pickleweed, glasswort, sea bean, sea pickle, and marsh samphire. Traditionally plucked from the shoreline, sea asparagus is farmed adjacent to shrimp farms on O'ahu's North Shore by scientist/farmer Wenhao Sun of Marine AgriFuture, LLC.

Sea asparagus seeds are germinated in fresh water in a greenhouse; its floating plant cultivation platform is then moved into salt water. "We're growing a terrestrial land plant on the surface of salt water," says Sun who spent years looking for a salt-water-tolerant plant that could meet the challenge of future fresh water deficiencies on earth. It takes about fourteen weeks from seed to harvest for sea asparagus to make its way to the market and onto fine dining plates.

**MARKET** This new product is also well liked for its nutritional value: sea asparagus is packed with phytochemicals that protect the liver and heart, plus vitamins and trace minerals that improve health.

Shoppers at the KCC Farmers' Market in Honolulu can meet the farmer and taste his product on Saturday mornings. It's also available in supermarkets throughout the islands.

**TABLE** Sea asparagus looks like a miniature asparagus tip and is loved by island chefs for its tender crunch and its flavor burst of salt. "There's no need to season this vegetable; in fact there are so many ways to use its texture and savoriness," says Chef Jon Matsubara of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel's seaside dining venue, Azure.

The chef's contemporary twist on the Hawaiian classic lomi lomi salmon (salted salmon, tomatoes and onions) trades sea asparagus for the salty salmon served atop a brined and smoked swordfish that imitates kalua pork, (Hawaiian smoky roasted pork). Sea asparagus lends itself to salads, often blanched to remove its brininess. Chef Matsubara uses it to accent a salad of anchovy garlic butter shrimp with Ho Farms tomatoes, Nozawa corn, and fresh mozzarella.

Sometimes sea asparagus is pickled; Chef Matsubara sometimes coats it with a light batter and makes tempura with it. "There are so many different applications for sea asparagus," Matsubara says with enthusiasm. "Plus, it's locally grown and abundant."

For culinary travelers, a visit to O'ahu offers unique, hyper-local food experiences to compliment the many popular visitor sites and off-the-beaten-path discoveries.

## WHERE TO FIND SEA ASPARAGUS

MARINE AGRIFUTURE LLC  
olakaihawaii.com

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hfbf.org/markets

AZURE AT ROYAL HAWAIIAN HOTEL  
royal-hawaiian.com/dining/azure

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# DONUT





SPECIAL FEATURE

# PLANTET

*From European festival food to blue-collar American breakfast, our nation's favorite sweet has taken on many forms throughout its history. Each one, whether it's a sticky jelly-filled donut or an airy chocolate glazed, is thoroughly, compulsively, delicious. By Michael Krondl*

Chocolate-glazed donuts from Neil's Donuts and Bake Shop in Wallingford, Connecticut





ON A RECENT MONDAY MORNING, Peter Pan Donut & Pastry Shop in Brooklyn was open barely 15 minutes, and the crowd waiting to buy fresh donuts had already spilled out the door. At the front of the line, half a dozen cops ordered their first meal of the day: hefty, craggy old-fashioned donuts and coffee. Next, the local pharmacy manager requested tea and a single glistening chocolate glazed. Then a young couple glanced up from their cellphones just long enough to get a red velvet cruller and a toasted coconut. When my turn came, I asked for one whole wheat, one red velvet, and a cup of coffee, slipped past the others to the worn Formica counters, and settled in.

Peter Pan makes the quintessential American donut. The whole wheat is sweet, soft, and cakey; rich without being greasy; its lumpy form dissolving into delicate crumbs with every bite. I convinced myself that whole wheat is healthy, but I couldn't kid myself about the red velvet. It's pure crimson-colored indulgence and should probably be outlawed this early in the morning. But that would surely be unconstitutional. Sugary, utterly satisfying, and just right for dunking in black coffee, it's an insanely addictive all-American breakfast. I polished it off without a second thought.

I wasn't always such a fan of these stateside staples. I grew up in Prague, where my childhood donut was a jelly-filled raised *kobliha*. I remember a giant airy pillow, juicy with apricot jam and covered with a sneeze-inducing blanket of powdered sugar. Compared to this bliss, my first encounter with an American donut left much to be desired: The pastry came out of a box and tasted of cardboard. For years afterward, I wrote off the donuts of my adopted home.

I had to wait until adulthood for my American donut epiphany. My girlfriend and I had rented a car for an autumn road trip through New England. We ticked off the clichés from our list: the white steeples, the electric foliage, the farmers' markets piled high with pumpkins and apples. At one roadside stand there was an automated donut-making gizmo that saturated the air with the smell of cinnamon sugar and fresh fried dough. Despite my prej-

MICHAEL KRONDL is the author of *Sweet Invention: A History of Dessert* (Chicago Review Press, 2011) and is writing a book on donuts. This is his first story for *SAVEUR*.

udices, I couldn't resist. What came out of that machine were perfect cider donuts, warm enough to take away the autumn chill, sweet enough so I couldn't stop at just one, crusty on the outside and tender within. Since that day, I've had a hard time resisting a cider donut—or any other fresh donut, for that matter.

While I adored the Czech jelly donuts I was weaned on, I discovered over time that for sheer ubiquity and cultural presence, neither they nor their cousins held a candle to the American donut. Though donuts take on countless shapes, textures, and forms around the globe (see "A World of Donuts," [page 49](#)), it's in America where these fried cakes came of age. How did the pastries of my European youth become a quotidian American treat? And why is this snack

**The cider donuts were warm enough to take away the autumn chill, sweet enough so I couldn't stop at one, crusty outside and tender within**

so very beloved on these shores? As it turned out, I ended up writing a book about it to fully understand. My search took me on a delicious journey all the way from the biblical past to the most innovative donut shops of today.

THE FIRST THING I LEARNED is that just about every civilization has some type of donut. The role that they played, however, came as a delightful surprise. Far from being a mere indulgence, many of these treats were imbued with a near mysticism. For much of history, deep-fried dough was considered sacred and celebratory. Perhaps the earliest written mention is in the book of Leviticus, specifying "cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried" as an offering worthy of God.

As fat and oil were costly, frying was the mark of a party. In medieval Europe, donuts were what you gorged on during Carnival, the feast period before the 40 days of Lent. It stands to reason that the prohibition against eating meat during Lent would have extended to donuts, which were then fried in hog fat. As every good (continued on [page 46](#))

## History of the American Donut



**1600s**

Donuts' evolution began in America. The Dutch brought *olykoeks* to New Netherlands; the Puritans brought "fry cakes" to New England.

**1809**

The first literary mention of "dough nuts," in Washington Irving's *A History of New York*, defined them as "balls of sweetened dough, fried in hog's fat."



**1847**

Trading ship captain Hanson Gregory claimed to have invented the ring-shaped donut by punching a hole through the pastry's undercooked center.

**1920**

The first automated donut machine was invented in New York by Adolph Levitt, a refugee from Russia, leading to a donut manufacturing boom.



**1934**

In *It Happened One Night*, newspaperman Clark Gable taught runaway heiress Claudette Colbert how to "dunk." Both she and the film won Academy Awards that year.

**1934**

Mechanically produced donuts, fried in an automated donut apparatus and served on the spot, dazzled and delighted visitors at the technology-themed World's Fair in Chicago, where they were billed as "the food hit of the Century of Progress."

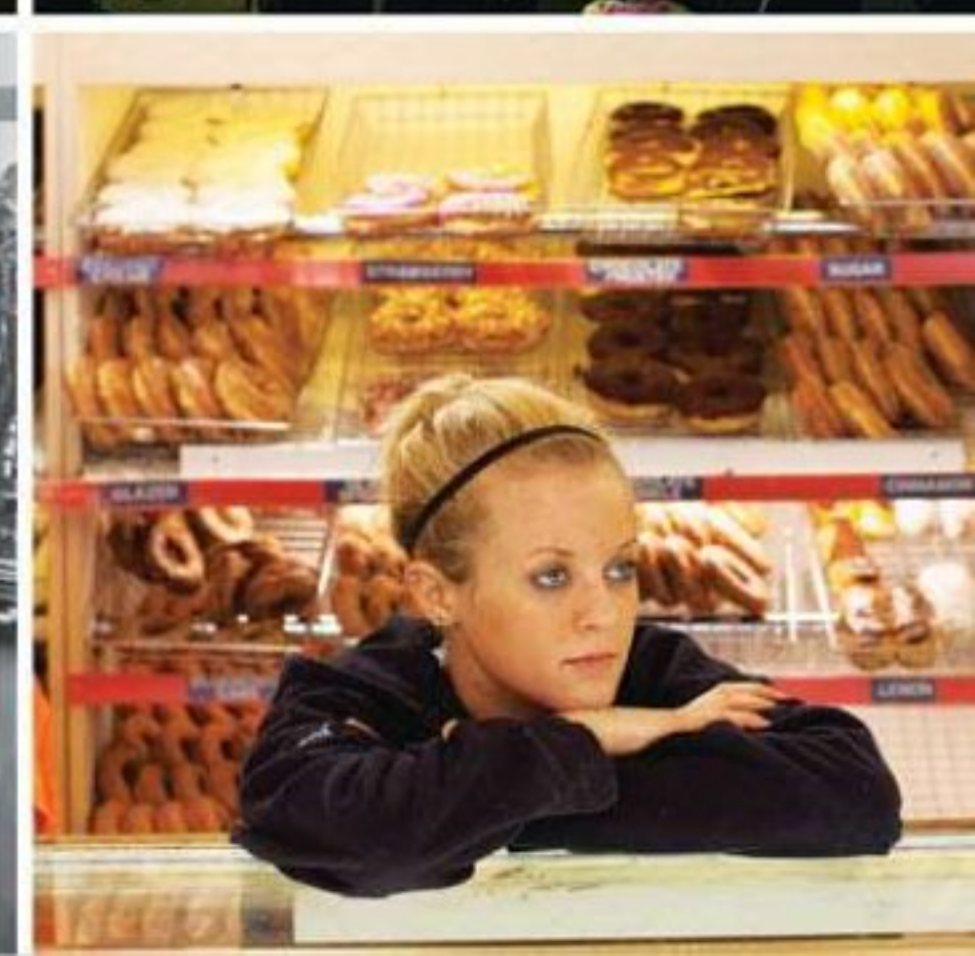
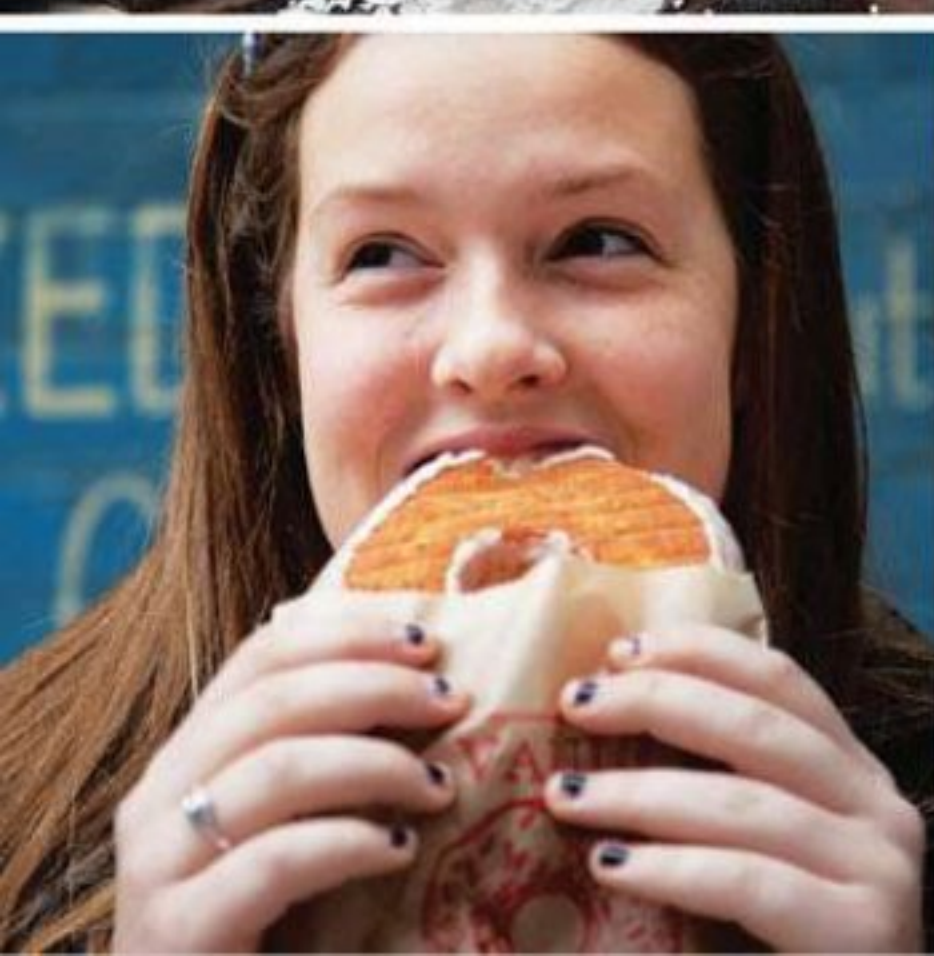
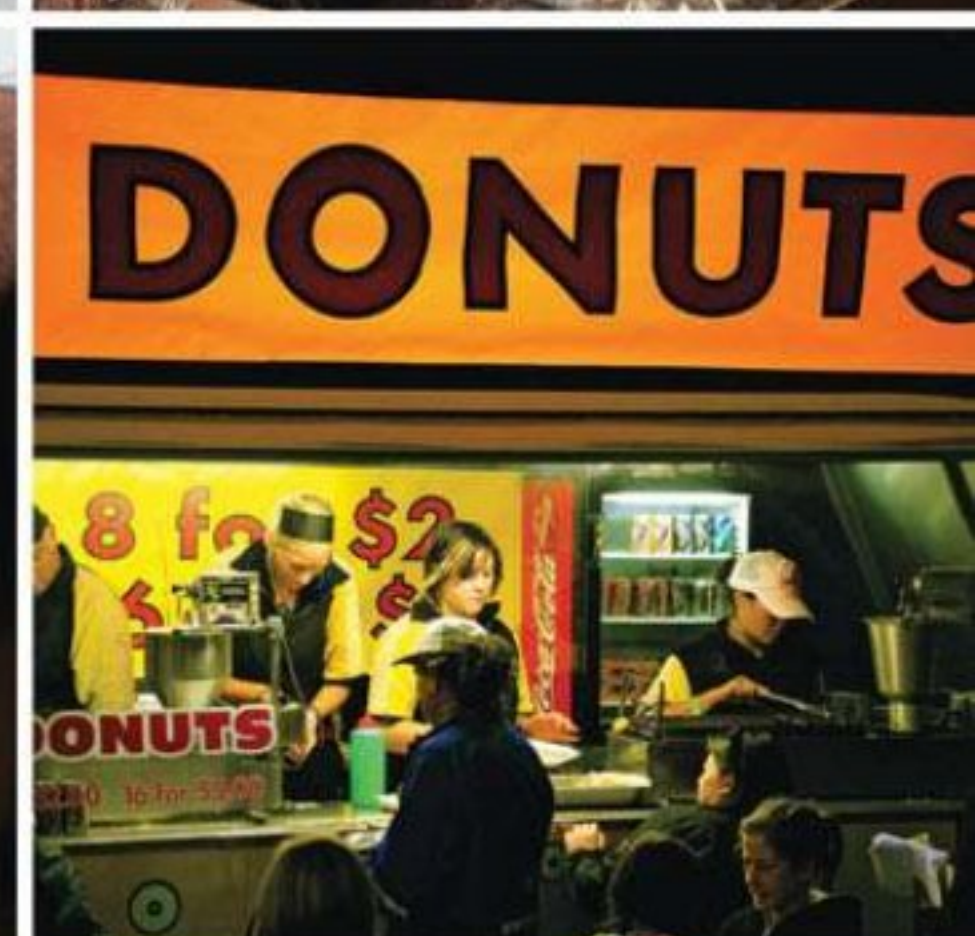
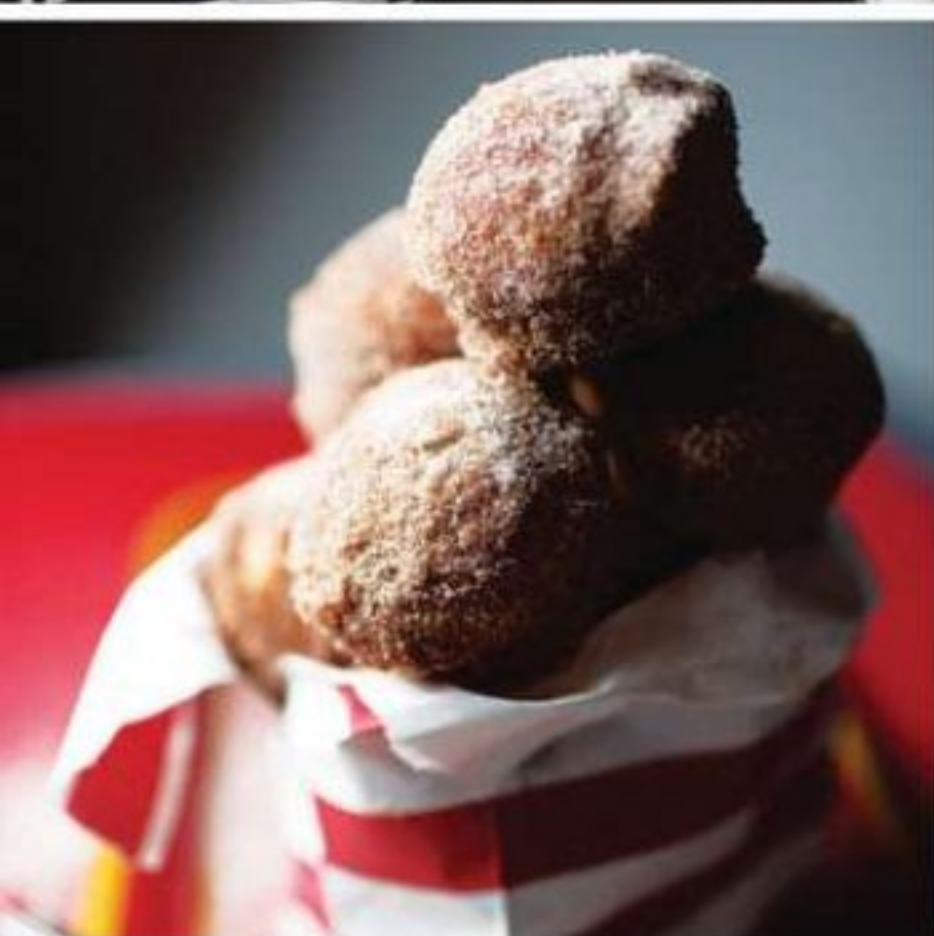




Patrick Addison, business partner and pastry chef at the Doughnut Vault in Chicago, holds a tray of chestnut-glazed donuts.

ARIANA LINDQUIST; FACING PAGE, ILLUSTRATIONS: JOSÉE BISAILLO/MORGAN GAYNIN









New England cider donuts with cinnamon sugar (see [page 54](#) for a recipe). Facing page, top row, from left: Economy Doughnuts and Sandwiches, one of many donut shops that opened in midcentury America; Jan Kaczmarek mixes dough for *paczki*, Polish jelly-filled donuts, at Polonia Bakery in Passaic, New Jersey; hot coffee and donut neon at Dat Donut in Chicago; Pat Marlowe strikes a pose as Miss Donut Queen 1947. Second row, from left: dirt bombs at Cottage Street Bakery in Orleans, Massachusetts (see [page 54](#) for a recipe); a vendor balances a tray of donuts in Granada, Nicaragua; dawn at Neil's Donuts and Bake Shop in Wallingford, Connecticut; a chocolate-glazed devil's food donut (see [page 54](#) for a recipe). Third row, from left: A server in Madrid, Spain, carries hot chocolate and churros; ghee-fried *laddoos* are sacred offerings at a Hindu festival in Ahmedabad, India; Top Pot triple coconut donuts (see [page 56](#) for a recipe); malasadas from Leonard's Bakery in Honolulu (see [page 59](#) for a recipe). Fourth row, from left: powdered sugar donut holes (see [page 56](#) for a recipe); Graysen Truong-Englebrecht tucks into a glazed donut at Earl's Donuts in Chatsworth, California; twisted French crullers at Neil's Donuts and Bake Shop; a late-night donut stand in New Plymouth, New Zealand. Bottom row, from left: a satisfied customer at the Doughnut Vault in Chicago; jelly donuts dunked in glaze at Dat Donut; in 1918 a Salvation Army "donut lassie" hands out sinkers in New York City; server Amanda Ottochian finds a quiet moment at Neil's Donuts and Bake Shop.







## ARIZONA

### Le Cave's

*Tucson*

This specialty donut shop has been making fritters since 1935. Though they're vegan and gluten free, the lemon-filled Bismarcks are still pure indulgence.

### Vantastic Donuts &

#### Bagels

*Glendale*

Iced buttermilk bars from this hole-in-the-wall diner have a tang that makes their sweetness glow.

## CALIFORNIA

### Bob's Donut & Pastry Shop

*San Francisco*

The right place for cake dunkers and glazed featherweights under fluorescent lights 24/7.

### Bouchon Bakery

*Yountville*

Brioche donuts are a weekend-only delicacy at Thomas Keller's wine country *boulangerie*.

### Donut Man

*Glendora*

You almost want a knife and fork to attack summer-time's fruit-loaded fresh peach donut at this always-open coffee shop.

### Doughnut Hut

*Burbank*

Orange glaze holds bits of zest, making this spot's eggy Frenchie (aka cruller) downright aristocratic.

### Dynamo Donuts

*San Francisco*

Sidewalk noshers line up at this 21st-century fry shack, helmed by a trained pastry chef, for the organic whole-breakfast donut topped with bacon, apples, and maple glaze.

### Earl's Donuts

*Chatsworth*

The devil's food old-fashioned from this unlikely

strip-mall source is gnarled and knobby, all the better to hold the spill of frosting.

### Marie's Donuts

*Sacramento*

This minimalist cinderblock shop offers substantial cinnamon "butterflies," whose wingspan provides maximum donut surface.

### Stan's Doughnuts

*Westwood Village*

You don't have to be Elvis to love the peanut butter and banana donut topped with chocolate chips sold at this cute little corner store.

## CONNECTICUT

### Dottie's Diner

*Woodbury*

Deeply tanned cake donuts, made from a decades-old recipe at this country-road diner, are topped with cinnamon sugar or chocolate frosting.

### Neil's Donuts and

#### Bake Shop

*Wallingford*

The raspberry jelly donut is a tsunami of sweetness enrobed in a fragile sugar glaze. No seats here. Fans just stand and eat.

### Orangeside

#### Luncheonette

*New Haven*

At this family diner, the winner among the distinctive square-shaped donuts is the almond-spiked buttercrunch.

## GEORGIA

### Sublime Doughnuts

*Atlanta*

The berries are big and fresh in the strawberry 'n' cream donut at this cheeky bakery whose motto is "Eat One That's Worth It."

## ILLINOIS

### Dat Donut

*Chicago*

The gargantuan glazed Big Dat at this Southside staple is fine and fluffy, while the

Boston cream heaves with vanilla pudding.

### The Doughnut Vault

*Chicago*

In this new-wave donut nook, Chicagoans wait patiently for their mini spiced donuts and full-size chocolate-almond beauties before inventory runs out (usually by noon).

### Old Fashioned

#### Donuts

*Chicago*

Though this shop discourages loiterers, it's still a must-visit for the mighty fritter, crusted with apple nuggets in cinnamon goo.

## KENTUCKY

### Nord's Bakery

*Louisville*

At this homespun bakery, the generous cream puffs don't skimp on the filling.

## LOUISIANA

### Café du Monde

*New Orleans*

Hot nuggets of fried dough called beignets, served three to an order and smothered with powdered sugar, are an unforgettable New Orleans experience.

### Meche's Donut King

*Breaux Bridge*

Known for regional specialties such as king's cake, this bakery excels at Cajun-country beignets, yeast-risen triangles rolled in cinnamon sugar.

### Morning Call Coffee

#### Stand

*Metairie*

Since 1870 this 24-hour institution has been serving airy beignets hot from the fryer with high-octane café au lait.

## MAINE

### Congdon's

#### Doughnuts

*Wells*

In a state better known for muffins, locals gather here to chat and enjoy text-

book-perfect honey-dipped donuts that have earned legions of devotees.

### Frosty's Donuts

*Brunswick*

Come early! Toasted coconut and other favorites at this quaint barnyard-red bakery often sell out before 9 A.M.

## MARYLAND

### Fractured Prune

*Ocean City*

"You create 'em, we make 'em" is the motto of this high-concept design-it-yourself bakery. Successful combos include the mocha-Oreo "morning buzz."

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Betty Ann Food Shop

*East Boston*

Lemon curd-filled donuts set the bar at this salty joint with famously brusque service.

### Donut Dip

*East Longmeadow*

Grab a seat at the horse-shoe counter to enjoy donuts that are studies in texture, such as crisp-skinned sour cream sinkers and ultralight crullers.

### Kane's Donuts

*Saugus*

Standouts at this homey, sun-filled spot include caramel frosted with buttercrunch and cartoonishly large coffee rolls.

### Marty's Donut Land

*Ipswich*

The creme-filled Long Johns are outstanding at this vintage breakfast counter.

## MICHIGAN

### Cops & Doughnuts

*Clare*

The pastry to eat at this police-owned shop is the triple chocolate: smooth chocolate custard, chocolate frosting, and chocolate chips.

### Friske Orchards

*Atwood*

The main business here is apples and cider, but cherry donuts made with local fruit are sweet-tart marvels.

### Sweetwater's

#### Donut Mill

*Kalamazoo*

This 24-hour drive-through wonder sells the fluffiest crullers and craveable chocolate clouds: chocolate-glazed raised donuts filled with creme.

## MINNESOTA

### Bloedow Bakery

*Winona*

At the place everyone goes after church on Sunday, the hefty yet fine-textured cake donuts and Long Johns are well nigh perfect.

### Lindstrom Bakery

*Lindstrom*

The moist and eggy Scandinavian donuts—plain, glazed, chocolate-drizzled, or cinnamon—are coffee's best friend at this humble wood-paneled bakery.

## MISSOURI

### Donut Stop

*St. Louis*

It may look like a gas station, but regulars know this St. Louis standby for its holeless "cinnamon globs," which deliver butter and spice richness in a generous coat of sugar.

## NEVADA

### Ronald's Donuts

*Las Vegas*

Far from the action, Ronald's makes vegan apple fritters that are moist and loaded with fruit.

## NEW YORK

### Cupcake Cafe

*New York City*

Ornate cupcakes get top billing at this midtown legend, but the whole wheat orange donuts are among New York's best.

### Doughnut Plant

*New York City*

Mark Israel's luxe organic donuts include outside-the-box flavors such as the panettone cake donut—a seasonal creation studded with golden raisins, candied citrus zest, and pine nuts, inspired by the Italian sweet bread.

### Peter Pan Donut &

#### Pastry Shop

*Brooklyn*

The summer special at this old-school lunch counter is vanilla ice cream sandwiched between a halved red velvet donut.

## NORTH CAROLINA

### Britt's Donuts

*Carolina Beach*

Fragile-skinned, tender glazed donuts are all this shop makes. A seasonal spot right on the boardwalk, it's open May to September.

## OHIO

### Bill's Donut Shop

*Centerville*

This low-slung, swivel-stooled favorite makes a twisted and glazed pretzel donut that packs maximum cake satisfaction.

## OREGON

### Annie's Donut Shop

*Portland*

The old-fashioned sinkers are a duet of crispness and softness with a fluffy center at this pre-*Portlandia* relic.

### Voodoo Doughnut

*Portland*

The pride of this over-the-top goth bakery is the maple-glazed Long John ribboned with bacon strips.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Federal Donuts

*Philadelphia*

The donuts at this ambitious newcomer include the Appollonia, served hot and rolled in cocoa and orange

blossom powder. The other specialty? Fried chicken.

## RHODE ISLAND

### Allie's Donuts

*North Kingstown*

Crunch-crusted raspberry jelly sticks star at this take-out-only destination.

## TEXAS

### Gourdough's

*Austin*

Donuts are fried to order at this shop inside a converted Airstream. Best donut: grilled banana with cream cheese icing.

### Round Rock Donuts

*Round Rock*

Sunny orange-glazed raised donuts, light enough that four to six are a reasonable breakfast, have made this a place for a donut lover's pilgrimage.

## VERMONT

### Mrs. Murphy's

#### Donuts

*Manchester Center*

At the busy counter, dedicated dunkers immerse cake donuts in cups of joe. Best of the bunch are the sour cream.

### P & H Truck Stop

*Newbury*

Truckers and tourists visit this roadside stop for barely sweet plain donuts that are as substantial as pound cake.

## VIRGINIA

### Do-Nut Dinette

*Norfolk*

By noon the ethereal glazed donuts at this diminutive diner are gone, and the place reverts to a good old greasy spoon.

## WASHINGTON

### Top Pot Doughnuts

*Seattle*

The flagship store has the ambiance of a rare book library, and its donuts have a wickedly crunchy surface and an interior as moist as warm cake.



(continued from [page 40](#)) Catholic knows, you need to sin before you can repent, and it became almost mandatory to eat as much forbidden food as possible before the door to the larder slammed shut. What better way to use up all the fat on Fat Tuesday than to fry some sweet dough?

With a little binge of my own in mind, I visited Austria's mountainous Tyrol region, one of the many places in Europe, I had heard, where they partake in that pre-Lenten tradition. I was not disappointed. When I got off the train, I was greeted with tables groaning under mountains of *faschingskrapfen*, carnival donuts in German, beckoning beneath a blizzard of sugar. Stands were loaded down with plump jelly donuts, and others filled with flavors such as custard, chocolate creme, and  *Eiercognac*, a boozy eggnog. By the end of my first day, I was covered with powdered sugar.

The more I explored, the more I saw the connection between donuts and holy days repeated throughout Europe, India, Asia, and Africa, among Hindus, Muslims, and Jews. In America, by contrast, donuts were embraced as an everyday food. Here, they took on the moniker "donut," the first donut machine and chain store were spawned, and the treat became breakfast, as well as a snack to be eaten at any time.

Some say donuts, in the form of sweet fritters called *olykoek*, landed with the Dutch in New Amsterdam. Other evidence—stronger, in my opinion—points to New England, where I had my American donut conversion. There, the donut was divorced from its Old World past. In America, Protestant settlers could ditch the Catholic holidays and enjoy fried cakes whenever they wanted. Meat, and thus cooking fat, was abundant, so it was easier than ever to indulge. By the late 18th century, donuts were common enough to be sent as a snack into the fields during haying season. In 1803 the first printed recipe for them appeared in Sussannah Carter's *The Frugal Housewife*.

In early donut recipes like this one, which calls for yeast-leavened dough enriched with sugar, eggs, and butter or lard, I saw a whisper of the ethereal donuts that are peddled at Krispy Kreme today. Though early versions were holeless and small enough to fit in your pocket, they were still fundamentally yeast-raised donuts. What better name for these crispy mouthfuls, which were roughly the size of a walnut, than "dough nuts," as it was then spelled?

Then there was the cake donut. Dense and crumbly

where yeast donuts are airy and bouncy (see "Deciphering the Donut," [page 51](#)), these creations—progenitors of today's chocolate rings and rough-hewn old-fashioned—caught on in America like nowhere else. It turned out Americans had been using baking soda in cakes since the earliest days of the republic, but it must have been a stroke of Yankee ingenuity to apply it to a donut. The earliest recipe, a mixture of flour, sugar, eggs, and butter with pearlash (a potassium carbonate predecessor to baking soda) mixed in for lift, appeared in an 1830's cookbook by Boston-based Lydia Maria Child. Compared to yeast donuts, which take time to rise, cake donuts are quick: You just add a chemical leavener and fry right away.

One of my favorites, the cruller, was around in those early days, too. Shaped into loops or twists, these donuts reflected their name, an old English (or Dutch) variant of "curl." But

## America is where the donut chain store was born, where the treat became an everyday food, and where it took on the moniker "donut"

the early cruller was more like a fried cookie, quite different from the wonderfully eggy choux pastry "French cruller" we eat today.

It's entirely uncertain when the cruller, or any American donut, got its hole. The oldest recipe I could find for a ring-shaped donut is from 1846, in *The Skillful Housewife's Book* by a Mrs. L.G. Abell, who calls for her "Excellent Common Fried Cake" to be "cut as jumbles"—the term for a ring-shaped pastry—"or in strips, and twisted, and fried in lard." Cutting a hole out of the center, I learned, not only gives the donut its iconic look, it also serves a function, allowing the dough to cook more evenly and faster than a donut without one.

SO HOW DID DONUTS become the quintessentially American food that they are today? By the mid-19th century, donuts were not only evolving, they seemed to be everywhere. Yankee soldiers battling the Confederacy were dispatched with donuts. Miners in (continued on [page 51](#))

**1937**

Vernon Rudolph opened the first Krispy Kreme in Old Salem, North Carolina, with a view of the donut production that became a signature.



**1941**

During World War II, Red Cross "Donut Dollies" passed out hot donuts to the troops for a taste of home. They went on to perform the same duties in Korea and Vietnam.

**1948**

William Rosenberg launched a donut shop called the Open Kettle in Quincy, Massachusetts. Two years later, he changed the name to Dunkin' Donuts.



**1964**

Canada's most beloved donut shop was opened in Hamilton, Ontario, by hockey star Tim Horton. Though Horton died in a car accident in 1974, the business grew into a multinational chain and infused the snack with Canadian pride—maple dip is a popular flavor.



**1972**

Dunkin' Donuts began slinging glazed, jelly-filled, cinnamon, and powdered sugar donut holes in boxes of 25, dubbing the tiny treats "Munchkins."

**1980s**

General Mills introduced Powdered Donutz, the first donut-flavored cereal that, according to the box, "tastes like real donuts." Others soon followed, such as Ralston's Dinky Donuts and Dunkin' Donuts Cereal in "glazed style" and chocolate-frosted O's.

ILLUSTRATIONS: JOSÉE BISAILLO/MORGAN GAYNIN



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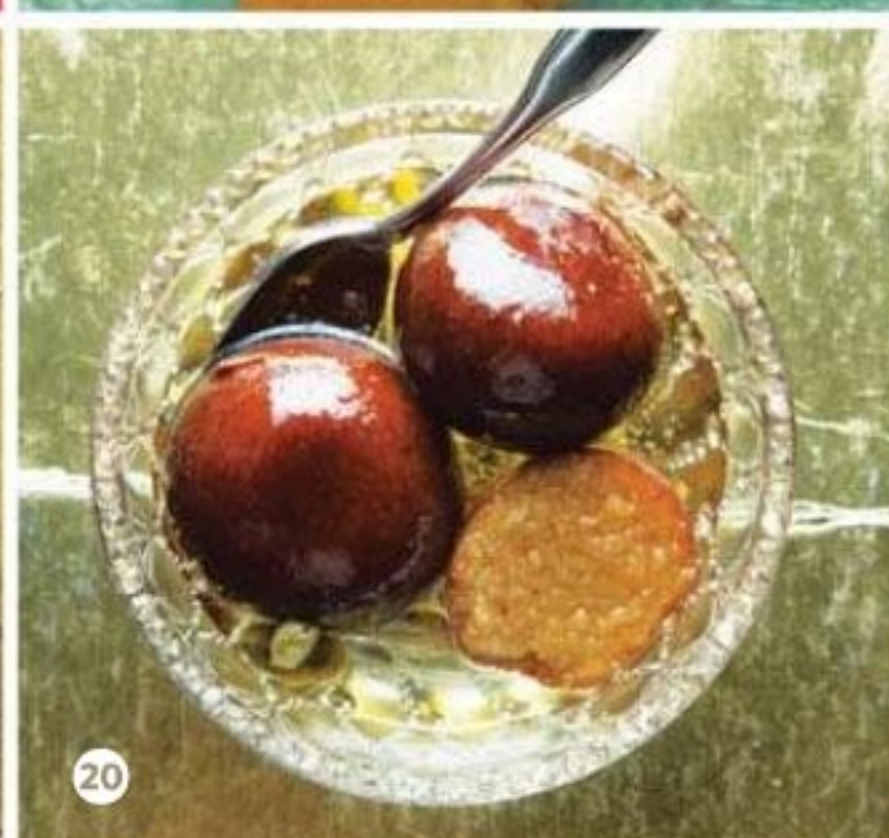
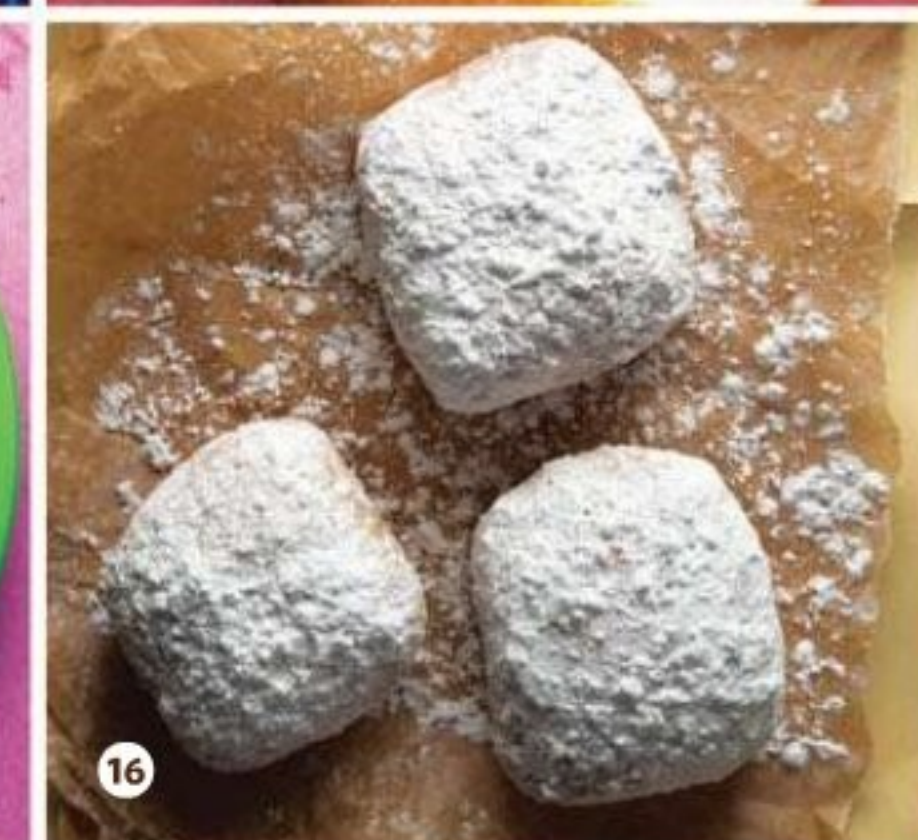
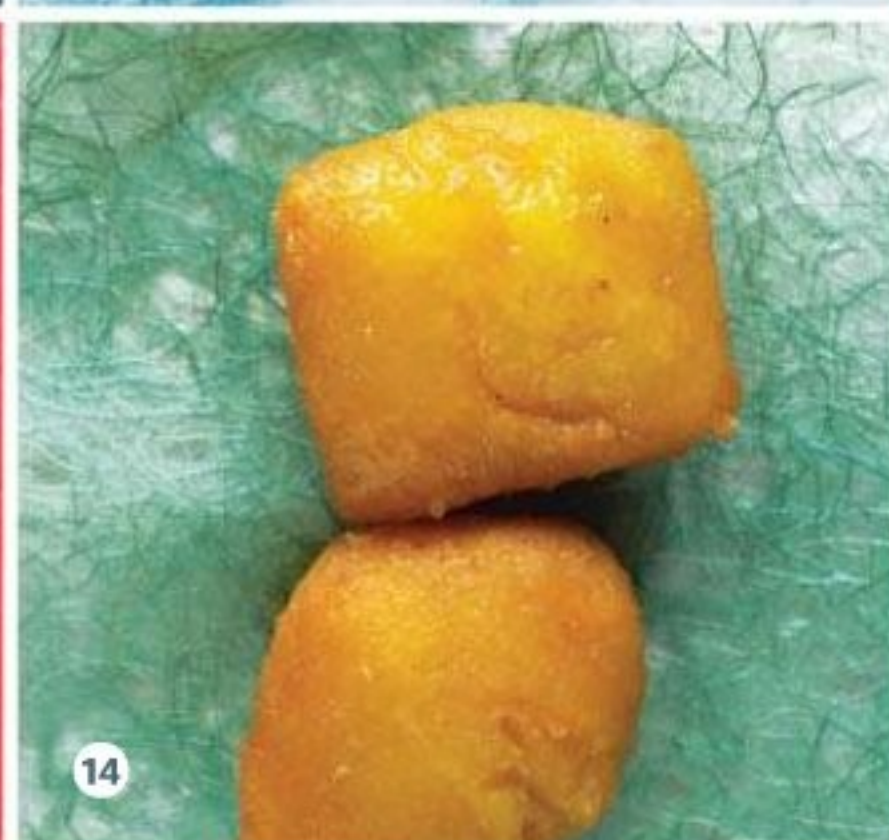
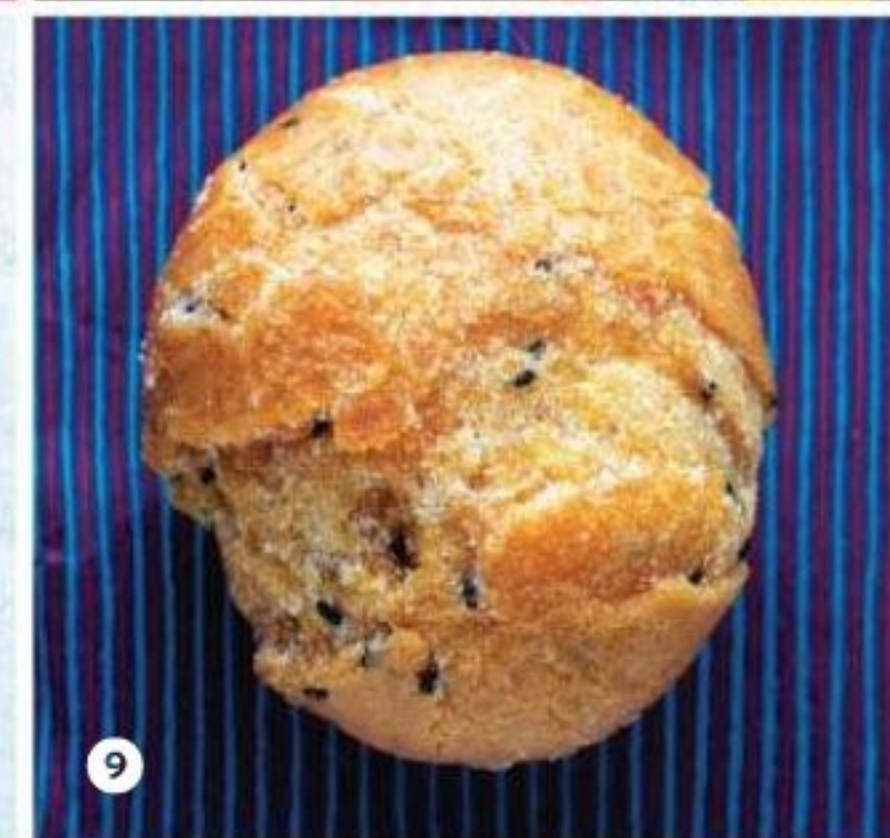
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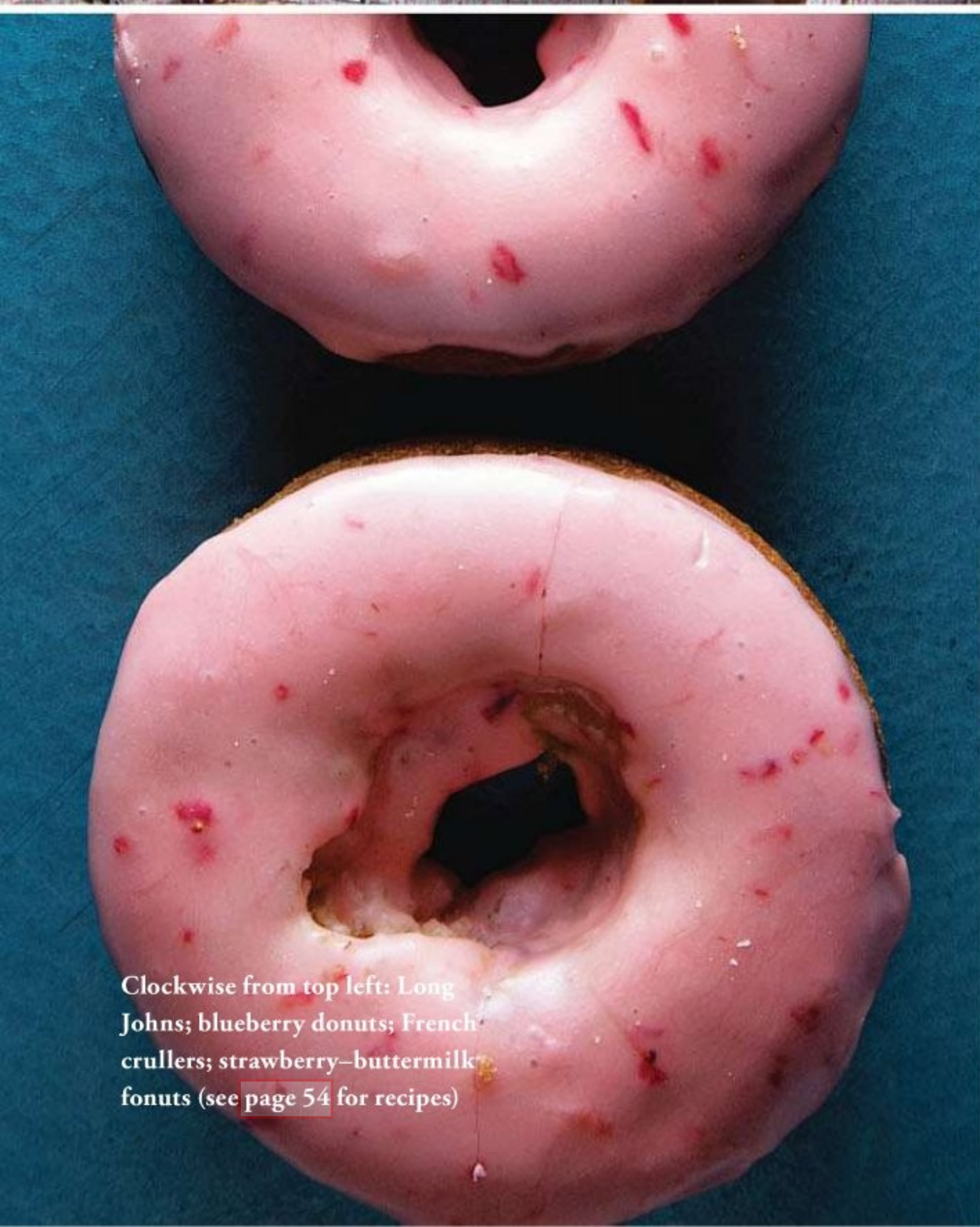


# A World of Donuts

Fried dough is a universal delight, and around the world, it comes in all shapes and guises, be it round or oblong, raised or flat, cooked in oil or simmered in ghee, filled with just about anything or simply dough through and through. Custard or jam is usually piped into Tuscan *bomboloni* **1**, raised, round donuts that come in all kinds of flavors, such as this Nutella cream version topped with toasted hazelnuts. *Jalebi* **2**, ubiquitous in South Asia and the Middle East, are brittle syrup-soaked coils of lightly fermented batter, often tinted orange-red, green, or yellow, and best eaten hot from a street vendor. *Sufganiya* **3**, Israel's fried Hanukkah sweet, is traditionally a jelly-filled donut, though in recent years, creative fillings such as halvah, pistachio, and champagne creams have appeared. The lightly salted cruller called *youtiao* **4**, or "Chinese oil stick," is creased in half so it can be easily torn for dunking into rice porridge or soy milk for breakfast. Enjoyed in northern India, Pakistan, and Nepal, yogurt-rich *balushahi* **5** are fried in ghee. In the Netherlands, fritters called *oliebollen* **6**, studded with raisins, dried currants, apples, and sometimes candied lemon peel, are typically eaten around Christmas. Turkish *tulumba* **7**, the word for kettle drum, is an extruded donut called by different names and eaten all over western Asia. The small ridged batons are piped into oil and saturated in sugar syrup. Similar in shape, only longer, *churros* **8** are eaten in Mexico, where they're often filled with dulce de leche or pastry cream. In Spain, these fluted wands of eggy pastry are dunked in hot chocolate. Savory *chal ke bahang* **9** is a Korean black sesame-speckled donut made especially chewy with wheat gluten and tapioca flour. Korea, China, and Japan lay claim to *an* **10**, a soft sugar-dusted yeast donut with a sweetened red bean center. Golden nuggets doused in honey called *loukoumades* **11** are popular in Greece and Cyprus. Chinese *jin deui* **12**, nutty fried orbs crusted with sesame seeds and with a sweet bean- or lotus seed-paste center, are often eaten as dim sum. This version of South African *koeksisters* **13**, which originated in Cape Malay, are donut holes soaked in a spiced syrup, then rolled in coconut flakes. Indian *shahi tukra* **14** are cubes of syrup-soaked fried bread pudding usually served with a rosewater and cardamom milk

sauce. A specialty of the Canadian city of Thunder Bay in Ontario, the fried, raised buns called *Persians* **15** are frosted with thick pink icing. Airy New Orleans' *beignets* **16**, a regional American classic, are buried in powdered sugar and typically enjoyed with a cup of chicory-blended café au lait. Mexican *buñuelos* **17** are cinnamon sugar-dusted disks that fry up bubbly and crisp, much like tortillas, while *buñuelos* **18** from Columbia are hand-formed spheres of sweetened or cheese-enriched fried dough. Featherlight powdered sugar-dusted fritters from France are cheekily dubbed *pets de nonnes* **19** ("nun's farts"). In South Asia, *gulab jamun* **20** (see page 60 for a recipe), made from a cooked-milk reduction called *khoya*, are fried at low temperature in clarified butter and soaked in rosewater or cardamom syrup. Rough-hewn, ring-shaped *sfenj* **21**, Arabic for "sponge," are a sweet street food eaten throughout North Africa. Introduced to Argentina by German immigrants, round, yeasted *bolas de fraile con dulce de leche* **22** are slit down the top and piped with dulce de leche. Nepalese *sel roti* **23** are both a breakfast food and special occasion treat, made with rice flour and fried into thin, crisp rounds. The walnut-size honey-glazed fritters called *struffoli* **24** are stacked in festive pyramids, can be sprinkled with nonpareils, Jordan almonds, or candied fruit, and start to appear in Naples during Christmastime. *Chal sticks* **25**, Korean baby carrot-sized cinnamon donuts, come half a dozen to an order, while *kkwabaegi* **26**, Korean yeasted twists, are oversized and coated in caramelized sugar. Italian cruller-like *zeppole* **27** are often topped with ricotta or pastry cream, then finished off with powdered sugar and a single cherry. The festival sweet is consumed on St. Joseph's Day. *Faschingskrapfen* **28**, raised donuts filled with jam, custard, or a flavored cream and sprinkled with powdered sugar, are everywhere in Austria and Germany during carnival celebrations. Central American *sopaipillas* **29**, puffed-up pillows of dough, are lavished with honey and powdered sugar. There are also savory versions topped with meat, sour cream, shredded lettuce, and tomato. Portuguese for "dreams," *sonhos* **30** are fried pastry bites soaked in syrup or dusted with cinnamon and powdered sugar.





Clockwise from top left: Long Johns; blueberry donuts; French crullers; strawberry-buttermilk fonuts (see page 54 for recipes)



(continued from [page 46](#)) the roaring '90s woke up to them. New arrivals to the promised land were indoctrinated in the cult of the sinker, midcentury slang for donut. When immigrants landed at Ellis Island they were greeted with donuts, as if to say, in America every day is feast day. During World War I, American soldiers got a taste of mom's cooking from Salvation Army "lassies," who handed out donuts. By the second World War, those donuts were produced from a mix and spewed out by Rube Goldberg-esque contraptions, both provided by the Donut Corporation of America. Its founder, Adolph Levitt, invented the first automated donut machine in 1921, and introduced the world to premade donut mixes, which changed the donut landscape forever.

Levitt's Wonderful Almost Human Automatic Doughnut Machine churned out 80 dozen donuts an hour and was relatively inexpensive, making it possible for would-be entrepreneurs to open "sinker and suds" joints, and led to the advent of the American donut chain. As shops proliferated, one way they distinguished themselves was by dreaming up new flavors. "The typical store had only four kinds of donuts: plain cake, jelly, yeast-raised, and a cruller," wrote William Rosenberg, founder of Dunkin' Donuts, in his memoir *Time to Make the Donuts* (Lebhar-Friedman, 2001). "I wondered, 'Why can't we make 28 or 52 or 108 varieties of donuts?'" Some of the flavors that emerged during that time are among my favorites: the classic chocolate-glazed and over-the-top Boston creme.

Donuts were becoming widespread, commonplace, even egalitarian. Many shops were open 24 hours, which made them magnets for cops, truck drivers, and other denizens of working-class America. In 1929 Americans ate 216 million donuts. Today, by one count, we eat close to 10 billion a year. As the once homespun food became a big business that hinged on mass production, it seemed only natural that a trend would emerge that I, for one, welcome: the small batch, upscale donut (see "Donut Renaissance," [page 53](#)).

In recent years, pastry chefs at fancy restaurants and bakers at artisanal donut shops have been applying fine ingredients, creative plating, and flavors such as Valrhona chocolate, crème brûlée, and foie gras to the previously humble donut. I even came across a vegan-organic donut shop, Pepples Donut Farm in Oakland, California, owned by a former punk musician, Josh Levine. In the spirit of this

## DECIPHERING THE DONUT

When you walk into your average American donut shop, chances are you'll find a few key varieties of donut, and each has its own delectable appeal. There are **yeast**, or raised, donuts—think classic Krispy Kremes or pillowy jelly-filled. Made from yeast-leavened dough that rises twice before it's fried—once after it's mixed, then again after it's shaped—the resulting donut is light and fluffy enough to melt in your mouth. Then there are **cake** donuts, the sturdiest of the bunch; prime examples are dense chocolate donuts or substantial old-fashioned. Made with a chemical leavener, such as baking powder, the dough doesn't need time to rise and can be fried immediately. These are the dunkers of the donut world, the ones with heft, a satisfying crust, and a moist interior. Unlike yeast donuts, they're still pretty good on day two...assuming you have the willpower to keep them around. The **cruller**, meanwhile, is made from eggy choux pastry, the same type used for eclairs and which is more like a batter than a dough. These extruded donuts are piped into twist or ring shapes before they're dunked into hot oil. Crisp on the outside, custardy within, and usually coated with a simple sugar glaze, the cruller is the donut at its most elegant. The most recent addition to the donut canon is the **baked donut**, a cupcake-like rendition of its fried cousin. Part of the allure of these moist-crumbed treats is how easy they are to make at home. Forged in the oven in muffin or ring-shaped tins, they pose no risk of spattering oil, yet the results can be pretty convincing. —Sophie Brickman

fried dough revolution, he calls one of his many ingenious creations the "WTF donut," a cake donut named for its blend of whiskey, bright tangerine, and fig glaze—a combination at once playful, decadent, and balanced.

Some might quibble that there's no need to mess with perfection, but as far as I'm concerned, when it comes to donuts, more is more. One thing that Levine told me that day about donuts still sticks with me: "They transcend all barriers." It's true, and it's good to know that there's something Oakland vegans and Brooklyn cops can agree on: If there's one thing we have in common as Americans, it's our love of the donut.

All of my fried dough adventures finally got me to take the plunge and start making donuts in my tiny Manhattan kitchen. My shiny new deep fryer took up half the counter, but it left just enough room to mix my first batch of cider donuts. I shaped the rings by hand, then lowered them with anticipation into the hot fat. Bobbing and brown, they were the prettiest pastries you'd ever want to see. Once they were puffed up and golden all over, I fished them out with a slotted spoon, drained them, and tossed them in cinnamon sugar. I won't admit how many I ate. Hot from the fryer, the donuts had a delicacy that elicited all the pleasures of childhood, and the warm sweet treats were better, even, for all I had learned about them. 🐷

**1982**

In a new ad, Dunkin' Donuts introduced Fred the Baker, whose catchphrase "Time to make the donuts!" became slang for the daily grind.



**1989**

Matt Groening's *The Simpsons* premiered, and TV audiences were introduced to donut-obsessed nuclear plant worker Homer Simpson, whose gluttonous mantra is "Mmm, donuts." In one episode, he even sold his soul to the devil for a donut.



**1997**

The legendary New York City restaurant Le Cirque reopened as Le Cirque 2000, featuring *bomboloni* (Italian filled donuts) on the new menu.



**1998**

Winchell's Donut House in Pasadena, California, created the world's largest sinker, weighing 5,000 pounds and stretching 95 feet in diameter.

**2002**

Eric "Badlands" Booker became the record holder for the most donuts consumed, with 49 glazed donuts down the hatch in eight minutes.



**2011**

The Big Kahuna burger, featuring a beef patty wedged between two grilled Krispy Kreme donuts, was introduced to controversy at the New York State Fair.









# Donut Renaissance

For much of their history, America's donuts have been a pedestrian food, the provenance of chain bakeries and coffee shops. But in the past 15 years, a fried-dough renaissance has been underway. Donut artisans, dreaming up inspired flavors and investing in high-quality ingredients, have been popping up all over the country. One pioneer is Mark Isreal (pictured at left), owner of the Doughnut Plant in New York City. Since 1994 he has been hand-crafting varieties as alluring as roasted chestnut; fresh coconut cream; and the burnt-sugar-glazed custard-filled crème brûlée using organic and locally sourced ingredients. Isreal rotates flavors as the fruits he uses for his glazes go in and out of season. He even has flour milled to his specifications, all in the pursuit of the perfect sinker. Such innovations have paved the way for scores of newfangled shops that are taking the donut from humble to haute. At the year-old Federal Donuts in Philadelphia, James Beard Award-winning chef Michael Solomonov offers donuts fried to order, showered in creative toppings such as vanilla-lavender sugar. Fōnuts, a baked-donut specialist in Los Angeles, is helping donuts shed their unhealthy image with vegan and gluten-free options, in trendy flavors such as salted caramel and strawberry-buttermilk (see page 54 for a recipe). Around the time that Isreal started out, donuts were also appearing at some of America's finest restaurants. In 1994 the chef-restaurateur Thomas Keller paired warm cinnamon-sugar brioche fritters with a cappuccino semifreddo in his now-iconic "coffee and donuts" dessert at the French Laundry in Yountville, California. In New York City, composed desserts such as pastry chef Jacques Torres' cream-filled *bomboloni* at Le Cirque 2000, and pastry chef Karen Demasco's buttermilk donuts with assorted dipping sauces at Craft, expanded on the notion that this is a comfort food worth elevating. Donuts have even attracted the avant garde treatment. At the experimental restaurant Moto in Chicago, former pastry chef Ben Roche made a soup by puréeing glazed donuts. Unlike chain stores, which make their donuts from a mix, these restaurants and new wave shops make theirs from scratch, which, as it turns out, is not so newfangled at all. —Gabriella Gershenson



*If you have a stand mixer, use it for every donut recipe. It gives you more control. You can adjust the speed and choose the best attachment for your needs. That way, there's less chance of overworking the dough and ending up with a tough donut.*

## BAKED DONUTS

### Cottage Street Bakery Dirt Bombs

MAKES ABOUT 1½ DOZEN

The crust of these muffin-like donuts (pictured on [page 42](#)), a specialty of Cottage Street Bakery in Orleans, Massachusetts, is achieved by double dipping them in melted butter and cinnamon sugar.

- 4½ cups unsalted butter, softened, plus more for greasing
- 3 cups (13½ oz.) all-purpose flour, sifted
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- ¼ tsp. ground cardamom
- 3½ cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 2½ tbsp. ground cinnamon

**1** Heat oven to 400°. Grease three 6-cup muffin tins with butter; set aside. Whisk flour, baking powder, salt, nutmeg, and cardamom in a bowl; set aside. Using a hand mixer, beat 12 tbsp. butter and 1 cup sugar in a bowl until fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Alternate adding dry ingredients in 3 batches and milk in 2 batches; beat until batter is smooth. Spoon about ¼ cup batter into prepared muffin tins; bake until golden and a toothpick inserted into donut comes out clean, 15–20 minutes. Invert donuts onto a baking sheet with a wire rack; let cool completely.

**2** Melt remaining butter in a bowl; in another bowl mix remaining sugar and the cinnamon. Working one at a time, dip entire donut in butter and

roll in the cinnamon sugar. Repeat dipping and rolling; return to wire rack until crust is set.

### Strawberry-Buttermilk Fonuts

MAKES ABOUT 1½ DOZEN

This recipe (pictured on [page 50](#)) is from Waylynn Lucas' Los Angeles-based baked donut shop called Fōnuts.

- 1¼ cups (5⅔ oz.) all-purpose flour, sifted
- ¾ cup sugar
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ⅔ cup canola oil, plus more for greasing
- ½ cup buttermilk
- 1 egg
- ½ tsp. white vinegar
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ cup finely chopped strawberries
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar

**1** Heat oven to 350°. Combine flour, sugar, soda, and salt in a bowl; make a well in the center and set aside. Whisk oil, buttermilk, egg, vinegar, and vanilla in a bowl; add to well, and mix into a smooth batter. Stir in half the strawberries; set aside. Lightly grease a nonstick donut pan; spoon 2 tbsp. batter into each mold. Bake until golden and a toothpick inserted into donut comes out clean, 13–15 minutes. Invert donuts onto a baking sheet with a wire rack; let cool completely.

**2** Whisk remaining strawberries, confectioners' sugar, and 2 tbsp. water until smooth. Dip tops of donuts into glaze and return to wire rack until glaze is set.

## CAKE DONUTS

### Blueberry Donuts

MAKES 14

Fresh blueberries bolstered by jam make these donuts (pictured on [page 50](#)) especially flavorful.

- 1 cup blueberries
- ¾ cup blueberry jam
- 4 cups (1 lb. 2 oz.) bread flour, sifted
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
- ½ cup sugar
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 3 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup milk
- 1 egg, beaten

Canola oil, for forming and frying

2 cups confectioners' sugar

**1** Mash blueberries and half the jam in a bowl; set aside. Whisk flour, baking powder, cinnamon, ½ tsp. salt, and nutmeg in a bowl; set aside. Combine sugar, butter, and 2 tsp. vanilla in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment; beat until smooth. Add reserved blueberry mixture, milk, and egg; beat until combined. With the motor running, slowly add dry ingredients and mix until a soft, sticky dough forms.

**2** Heat 2" oil in a 6-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 370°. Using lightly oiled hands, roll about ¼ cup batter into a loose, sticky ball; pat gently into a disk. With your thumb, make a 1½" hole in the center of dough; carefully slide into oil and fry, flipping once, until puffed and golden, 3–4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a baking sheet with a wire rack; repeat with remaining dough and let donuts cool completely.

**3** Whisk remaining jam, salt, and vanilla, plus confectioners' sugar, and ½ cup hot water in a bowl until smooth. Dip donuts completely in glaze and return to rack until glaze is set.

### Devil's Food Donuts

MAKES ABOUT 1½ DOZEN

These donuts (pictured on [page 42](#)) puff up visibly when they are ready to be removed from the frying oil.

- 3¼ cups (14⅔ oz.) bread flour, sifted
- ¾ cup cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ¾ tsp. kosher salt
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 3 oz. bittersweet chocolate, grated
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- ¾ cup buttermilk
- 2 eggs, plus 2 yolks
- Canola oil, for forming and frying
- 3 oz. unsweetened chocolate, grated
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- ¼ cup heavy cream

**1** Whisk flour, powders, soda, salt, and cinnamon in a bowl; set aside. Combine sugar, butter, bittersweet chocolate, vanilla, buttermilk, eggs, and yolks in the bowl of a stand

mixer fitted with a paddle attachment; beat until smooth. With the motor running, slowly add dry ingredients and mix until a soft, sticky dough forms.

**2** Heat 2" oil in a 6-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 350°. Using lightly oiled hands, roll about ¼ cup batter into a loose, sticky ball; pat gently into a disk. With your thumb, make a 1½" hole in the center of dough; carefully slide into oil and fry, flipping once, until puffed and golden, about 3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a baking sheet with a wire rack; repeat with remaining dough and let donuts cool completely.

**3** Mix unsweetened chocolate and confectioners' sugar in a bowl. Bring cream and 2 tbsp. water to a boil in a 1-qt. pan over high heat. Pour cream over chocolate; let sit for 2 minutes without stirring, then whisk until smooth. Dip tops of donuts in glaze and return to rack until glaze is set.

### New England Cinnamon Sugar-Cider Donuts

MAKES ABOUT 1 DOZEN

These donuts (pictured on [page 43](#)), can also be dipped in a simple glaze made from boiled-down apple cider, butter, and confectioners' sugar.

- 1¾ cups (7¾ oz.) all-purpose flour, sifted
- ¼ cup (1½ oz.) whole wheat graham flour (see [page 92](#))
- 3½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1½ cups sugar
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ¼ cup apple cider
- ¼ cup buttermilk
- Canola oil, for forming and frying

**1** Whisk flours, 2 tsp. cinnamon, baking powder, soda, and salt in a bowl; set aside. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat butter and ½ cup sugar until fluffy. Add yolks, vanilla, cider, and buttermilk; mix until smooth. With the motor running, slowly add dry ingredients and mix until a soft, sticky dough forms.

**2** Combine remaining cinnamon and sugar in a bowl; set aside. Heat 2" oil in a 6-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 350°. Using lightly oiled hands, roll about





From top: Brothers Ron and Bob Donath, right, share coffee and donuts at Neil's Donuts and Bake Shop in Wallingford, Connecticut; jam-filled *Berliners* (see page 56 for a recipe)



*Proofing, the “resting” period in which yeasted dough is left to rise, requires proper time and temperature. An overproofed dough will result in a deflated, greasy product, while an under-proofed one will lack the desired airiness.*

¼ cup batter into a loose, sticky ball; pat gently into a disk. With your thumb, make a 1½” hole in the center of dough; carefully slide into oil and fry, flipping once, until golden, 3–4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a baking sheet with a wire rack; repeat with remaining dough. Let donuts cool completely; toss in cinnamon-sugar mixture.

### ❖ Old-Fashioned Spiced Sour Cream Donuts

MAKES ABOUT 14

These classic cake donuts (pictured on [page 65](#)), are fried at a lower temperature to produce their characteristic cracks and ridges.

- 4 cups (1 lb. 2 oz.) bread flour, sifted
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 4½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 4 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 3 tsp. ground ginger
- 2 tsp. ground allspice
- 1½ tsp. kosher salt
- ½ tsp. ground cloves
- 2 eggs
- 1¼ cups sour cream
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- Canola oil, for forming and frying
- 2 cups confectioners’ sugar
- 1½ tsp. vanilla extract

**1** Whisk flour, sugar, baking powder, 3 tsp. cinnamon, 3 tsp. nutmeg, ginger, 1½ tsp. allspice, salt, and cloves in a bowl; set aside. Combine eggs, sour cream, and butter in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment; beat until smooth. With the motor running, slowly add dry ingredients and mix until a soft, sticky dough forms.

**2** Heat 2” oil in a 6-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 325°. Using lightly oiled hands, roll about ¼ cup batter into a loose, sticky ball; pat gently into a disk. With your thumb, make a 1½” hole in the center of dough; carefully slide into oil and fry, flipping once, until puffed and golden, 4–5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a baking sheet with a wire rack; repeat with remaining dough and let donuts cool completely.

**3** Whisk remaining cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice, plus confectioners’ sugar, vanilla, and ¼ cup water in a bowl until smooth. Dip tops of donuts in glaze and return to wire rack until glaze is set.

### Powdered Sugar Donut Holes

MAKES ABOUT 5½ DOZEN

The secret to the snowy dusting on these donut holes (pictured on [page 42](#)) is to toss them with far more confectioners’ sugar than you would think necessary.

- 3 cups (13½ oz.) bread flour, sifted
- 2 tbsp. instant potato flakes
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ½ cup sugar
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup milk
- 1 egg, beaten
- Canola oil, for forming and frying
- 4 cups confectioners’ sugar

**1** Whisk flour, flakes, baking powder, and salt in a bowl; set aside. Combine sugar, butter, vanilla, milk, and egg in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment; beat until smooth. With the motor running, slowly add dry ingredients and mix until a soft, sticky dough forms.

**2** Heat 2” oil in a 6-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 350°. Working in batches and using lightly oiled hands, roll about 1 heaping tablespoon batter into a loose, sticky ball; carefully slide into oil and fry, turning often, until puffed and golden, 2–3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a baking sheet with a wire rack; repeat with remaining dough and let donuts cool. Place donuts and confectioners’ sugar in a large paper grocery bag; toss, coating completely.

### Top Pot Triple Coconut Donuts

MAKES ABOUT 10

Coconut milk gives these donuts (pictured on [page 42](#)) from Seattle’s Top Pot donut shop a super-moist interior and a gratifying crust.

- 3½ cups (15¾ oz.) bread flour, sifted
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
- ½ cup sugar
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 4 tsp. coconut extract
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1¼ cups canned coconut milk
- 1 egg, beaten
- Canola oil, for forming and frying
- 2 cups sweetened shredded coconut
- 2 cups confectioners’ sugar

**1** Whisk flour, baking powder, soda, ½ tsp. salt, and the nutmeg in a bowl; set aside. Combine sugar, butter, 2 tsp. coconut extract, 1 tsp. vanilla extract, 1 cup coconut milk, and egg in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment; mix until smooth. With the motor running, slowly add dry ingredients and mix until a soft, sticky dough forms.

**2** Heat 2” oil in a 6-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 370°. Using lightly oiled hands, roll about ¼ cup batter into a loose, sticky ball; pat gently into a disk. With your thumb, make a 1½” hole in the center of dough; carefully slide into oil and fry, flipping once, until puffed and golden, about 3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a baking sheet with a wire rack; repeat with remaining dough and let donuts cool completely.

**3** Heat oven to 350°. Spread coconut on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Bake, stirring, until golden brown, 7–8 minutes; cool. Whisk remaining salt, extracts, and coconut milk, plus confectioners’ sugar in a bowl until smooth. Dip tops of donuts in glaze, then in toasted coconut; return to rack until glaze is set.

## YEAST-RISEN DONUTS

### ❖ Berliners

(Jelly-filled Donuts)

MAKES ABOUT 2 DOZEN

If piping the jelly into these donuts (pictured on [page 55](#)) proves challenging, use a paring knife to hollow out the side of the donut, making a cavity for the jelly.

- 2 ¼-oz. packages active dry yeast
- 1½ cups milk heated to 115°
- 1½ cups sugar
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened, plus more for greasing
- 1 tbsp. vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 egg, plus 3 yolks
- 4¾ cups (1 lb. 5 oz.) all-purpose flour, sifted, plus more for dusting
- Canola oil, for frying
- 2 cups seedless strawberry or plum jam, for filling

## TIPS FOR PERFECT CAKE DONUTS

Cake dough sticks to the bowl. It sticks to your hands. It can be exasperating. The truth is that cake donuts should have a sticky dough—it’s a cake dough, not a bread dough, after all. So what can you do? Inexperienced cooks tend to roll or pat the dough out on a well-floured surface, then dust it with more flour. This does make the dough easier to handle. Unfortunately, it also tips the balance of ingredients into the realm of a bread dough, yielding a dense, chewy donut. Professional donut makers understand this; that’s why they use a machine, an extruder, that forces dough through a hole-centered die, dropping delicate rings, unfettered by excess flour, straight into the oil. The result is a tender, moist confection. Since most extruders won’t fit in a home kitchen, we came up with a few manual methods for working with the sticky dough. First, lightly oil or wet your hands. Roll about a quarter cup dough into a ball, pat it into a disk, and poke a hole in it with your thumb. Then slide it carefully into the frying oil. Another good method: Using a rubber spatula, scrape the dough onto a plastic-wrapped cookie sheet, then chill. The dough won’t stick to the plastic wrap, and chilling firms it, removing tackiness. Or dispense the dough from an oiled antique-style donut press (pictured at left) or an Indian *medu vada* maker. These tools—essentially handheld manual extruders—can be found online (see [THE PANTRY](#) on [page 92](#)). —Todd Coleman







Vanilla-glazed yeast donuts (see [page 59](#) for a recipe)



# 13 Tempting Toppings

Toppings provide a relatively easy way to add flavor, pizzazz, and variety to donuts. At quirky shops such as Portland, Oregon's Voodoo Doughnut, the selection ranges all the way from iconic sprinkles to unconventional bacon or Froot Loops. Below, some of our favorites, both modern and traditional.



**Bacon** Hickory-smoked strips are great for flavor, snap, and visual impact atop a Long John.



**Kids' cereal** Froot Loops, a Voodoo Doughnut signature, lend crunch and color to donuts, plus they're the same shape.



**Candied citrus peel** Boil rind in simple syrup and then roll it in granulated sugar for a topping that adds bittersweet contrast to Neapolitan *struffoli* and other honey-soaked fritters.



**Red Hots** The spicy, chewy candies are a bright-hued alternative to a traditional cinnamon-sugar glaze.



**Nonpareils** The key to getting these edible confetti to stick to a donut is to apply them while the glaze is still wet.



**Fresh fruit** Seasonal fresh fruit lends tang and color when set atop donuts or puréed and mixed into glaze.



**Sprinkles** For a visual bang, cover the entire top half of a raised donut in sprinkles to its center seam, or "skunk line."



**Cookies** Crushed Oreos lend a striking black and white gravel effect and rich chocolate and vanilla flavor.



**Caramel** Freeze caramels to easily crumble them in a food processor. Sprinkle them on a donut for burnt-sugar richness.



**Candy** Small candies are ready to use straight from the bag, while larger bars can be frozen and chopped to use as a topping.



**Dried fruit** Given its concentrated flavor, a little dried fruit goes a long way; it's best to use it finely chopped.



**Nuts** Whether it's almond slivers on Nepalese *balushahi* or hazelnuts crowning *bomboloni*, nuts make a crunchy, savory topping. Toast them first to maximize their flavor.



**Rose petals** Dipped in egg whites, dragged through superfine sugar, and dried, the petals add fragrant, colorful accents.



**1** Combine yeast and milk in a bowl; let sit until foamy, about 10 minutes. Beat  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar and butter in a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment until fluffy. Add yeast mixture, vanilla, salt, egg, and yolks; beat until combined. With the motor running, slowly add flour; beat until dough is smooth. Transfer to a lightly greased bowl and cover loosely with plastic wrap; set in a warm place until doubled in size, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

**2** On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 14" round about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick. Using a floured 3" ring cutter, cut dough into 20 rounds; gather and reuse scraps. Transfer rounds to lightly greased parchment paper-lined baking sheets, at least 3" apart. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and set in a warm place until doubled in size, about 30 minutes.

**3** Heat 2" oil in a 6-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 350°. Using scissors, cut the donuts out of the parchment paper, leaving about 1" of paper around the sides of each donut (the paper makes it easier to transfer them to frying oil). Working in batches, place donuts in oil, paper side up, using tongs to quickly peel off and discard paper. Cook, flipping once, until puffed and golden, 2–3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a baking sheet with a wire rack; let cool completely.

**4** Place remaining sugar in a large bowl; set aside. Fill a pastry bag fitted with a plain  $\frac{1}{4}$ " tip with jam. Working with one donut at a time, insert tip about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep into the side of donut, pipe 2–3 tbsp. jam, and toss generously in sugar.

### Leonard's Bakery Hawaii Malasadas

MAKES ABOUT 1 DOZEN

Butter, milk, and half & half give these Portuguese-style donuts (pictured on [page 42](#)) their distinctive richness and luscious texture.

- 1 tbsp. active dry yeast
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup half & half
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. kosher salt
- 4 cups bread flour (1 lb. 2 oz.), sifted
- Canola oil, for frying

**1** Combine yeast, 1 tsp. sugar, and 2 tbsp. water heated to 115° in a bowl; let sit until foamy, about 10

minutes; set aside. Beat eggs in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment until fluffy. Add yeast mixture,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar, butter, milk, half & half, and salt; mix until combined. With the motor running, slowly add flour; beat until dough is smooth. Transfer to a lightly greased bowl and cover loosely with plastic wrap; set in a warm place until doubled in size, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

**2** On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 12" square about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick. Using a knife, cut dough into 3" squares; gather and reuse scraps. Place on greased parchment paper-lined baking sheets, at least 3" apart; cover loosely with plastic wrap and set aside in a warm place until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

**3** Place remaining sugar in a large bowl; set aside. Heat 2" oil in a 6-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 350°. Using scissors, cut the donuts out of the parchment paper, leaving about 1" of paper around the sides of each donut (the paper makes it easier to transfer them to frying oil). Working in batches, place donuts in oil, paper side up, using tongs to peel off and discard paper. Cook, flipping once until puffed and golden, 2–3 minutes. Transfer to a baking sheet with a wire rack; let cool completely, then toss with sugar.

### Long Johns

MAKES 8

The trick to piping custard into these bar-shaped confections (also called eclairs, pictured on [page 50](#)) is to use a wooden skewer to carve out a channel in the donut before filling it.

#### FOR THE CUSTARD:

- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup sugar
- 3 egg yolks
- 2 tbsp. cornstarch
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, cubed
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup milk

#### FOR THE DONUTS:

- 1  $\frac{1}{4}$ -oz. package active dry yeast
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 2 tbsp. vegetable shortening
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup evaporated milk
- 1 egg, beaten
- $2\frac{1}{2}$  cups (11  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz.) all-purpose flour, sifted, plus more for dusting
- Canola oil, for frying

#### FOR THE GLAZE:

- 2 oz. semisweet chocolate,

finely chopped

- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. kosher salt
- 2 tbsp. milk
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter

**1** Make the custard: Whisk sugar, yolks, and cornstarch in a 1-qt. pan until smooth. Add butter, vanilla, and milk; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook, stirring, until custard is thick, 3–5 minutes. Pour through a mesh strainer into a bowl; cover surface with plastic wrap. Chill completely.

**2** Make the donuts: Combine yeast, 1 tsp. sugar, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup warm water heated to 115° in a bowl; let sit until foamy, 8–10 minutes. Add remaining sugar, shortening, salt, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup boiling water to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment; mix until shortening is melted. Add yeast mixture, nutmeg, milk, and egg; mix. With motor running, slowly add flour; beat until smooth. Transfer to a lightly floured surface and knead until elastic. Let dough rest 10 minutes. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into an 8" square about 1" thick; cut into 8 strips. Transfer to greased parchment paper-lined baking sheets, spaced 2" apart; cover loosely with plastic wrap and set in a warm place until doubled in size, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

**3** Heat 2" oil in a 6-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 350°. Using scissors, cut the donuts out of the parchment paper, leaving about 1" of paper around the sides of each donut (the paper makes it easier to transfer them to frying oil). Working in batches, place donuts in oil, paper side up, using tongs to peel off and discard paper. Cook, flipping once until golden, 2–3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a baking sheet with a wire rack; let cool.

**4** Transfer chilled custard to a pastry bag fitted with a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " plain tip; set aside. Using a skewer, make 2 holes lengthwise through the ends of each donut that meet in middle. Working with one donut at a time, pipe 2–3 tbsp. filling into each hole; repeat with remaining donuts and custard.

**5** Make the glaze: Mix chocolate, sugar, vanilla, and salt in a bowl; set aside. Bring milk and butter to a boil in a 1-qt. pan. Pour over chocolate; let sit 2 minutes without stirring. Whisk until smooth and pour glaze into a pie dish. Dip tops of donuts into glaze; return to rack until set.

*The proteins in high-gluten flours, such as bread flour, give structure to a cake dough and help form a barrier against oil absorption during frying, resulting in an airier, less greasy donut.*

### ★ Vanilla-Glazed Yeast Donuts

MAKES ABOUT  $1\frac{1}{2}$  DOZEN

The glaze on these airy donuts (pictured on [page 57](#)) achieves its satiny consistency thanks to a combination of clarified butter and evaporated milk.

- 2  $\frac{1}{4}$ -oz. packages active dry yeast
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups milk, scalded and cooled
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 2 eggs
- 6 tbsp. vegetable shortening, plus more for greasing
- 5 cups (1 lb. 6  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz.) all-purpose flour, sifted, plus more for dusting
- Canola oil, for frying
- 10 tbsp. unsalted butter
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup evaporated milk
- $2\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. vanilla extract
- $2\frac{1}{2}$  cups confectioners' sugar

**1** Combine yeast, 1 tbsp. sugar, and 6 tbsp. water heated to 115° in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment; let sit until foamy, about 10 minutes. Add remaining sugar, plus milk, salt, eggs, and shortening; mix until combined. With the motor running, slowly add flour; beat until dough is smooth. Transfer to a lightly greased bowl and cover loosely with plastic wrap; set in a warm place until doubled in size, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

**2** Turn dough onto lightly floured surface; roll dough into a 13" round about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick. Using floured  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " and  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " ring cutters, cut out donuts and holes; gather and reuse scraps. Place on greased parchment paper-lined baking sheets, at least 3" apart, and cover loosely with plastic wrap; set in a warm place until doubled in size, about 45 minutes.



*To avoid oily donuts, remember: Fat attracts fat. The less you use in your dough, the lighter the donut will be after frying. Also go light on flour when rolling out dough, and use a brush to remove any excess; loose flour particles attract and absorb oil.*

**3** Heat 2" oil in a 6-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 325°. Using scissors, cut the donuts out of the parchment paper, leaving about 1" of paper around the sides of each donut (the paper makes it easier to transfer them to frying oil). Working in batches, place donuts in oil, paper side up, using tongs to peel off and discard paper. Cook, flipping once until puffed and golden, about 3–4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a baking sheet with a wire rack; let cool completely.

**4** Melt butter in a 1-qt. saucepan over medium-low heat. Using a small ladle, skim and discard white film from surface. Slowly pour liquid from pan into a bowl, leaving sediment behind; let cool 1 minute. Add evaporated milk, vanilla, ¼ cup water, and sugar; whisk until smooth. Dip donuts in glaze, coating completely; return to wire rack until glaze is set.

## OTHER DONUTS

### ★ French Crullers

**MAKES ABOUT 1½ DOZEN**  
Named for their twisted shape, these donuts (pictured on [page 50](#)) get their airy texture from choux pastry.

- ¾ cup unsalted butter, cubed, plus more for greasing
- 4 tsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ cup vodka
- 2 cups (9 oz.) all-purpose flour, sifted
- ½ cup instant potato flakes
- 3 tbsp. cornstarch
- 6 eggs, plus 4 egg whites
- Canola oil, for frying
- 4 cups confectioners' sugar

2 tbsp. honey

**1** Melt butter in a 1-qt. saucepan over medium-low heat. Using a small ladle, skim and discard white film from surface. Slowly pour liquid from pan into a bowl, leaving sediment behind; let cool 1 minute.

**2** Line baking sheets with parchment paper and lightly grease; set aside. Bring melted butter, sugar, salt, vodka, and 1¾ cups water to a boil in a 4-qt. saucepan over high heat. Reduce heat to medium, add flour, flakes, and cornstarch and cook, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until mixture pulls away from sides of pan, 2–3 minutes. Continue to cook, stirring, until mixture is slightly dry and a thin film coats bottom of pan, about 4 minutes more.

**3** Transfer dough to bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment; beat until slightly cool, about 2 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until completely absorbed, scraping sides of bowl as needed, then beat in whites. Transfer dough to a pastry bag fitted with a ¾" star tip; refrigerate 1 hour.

**4** Heat 2" oil in a 6-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 325°. Pipe 3" rings onto greased parchment, at least 2" apart. Using scissors, cut the donuts out of the parchment paper, leaving about 1" of paper around the sides of each donut (the paper makes it easier to transfer them to frying oil). Working in batches, place crullers in oil, paper side up, using tongs to peel off and discard paper. Cook, flipping once until puffed and golden, about 15 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a baking sheet with a wire rack; let cool completely.

**5** Whisk confectioners' sugar, honey, and ½ cup hot water in a bowl until smooth. Dip donuts in glaze, coating completely; return to rack until glaze is set.

### Gulab Jamun

(Cardamom Syrup-soaked Donuts)  
**MAKES 16**

The recipe for these South Asian syrup-soaked confections (pictured on [page 48](#)) comes from test kitchen assistant Sahar Siddiqi. The base for these is *khoya*, a rich curd made by reducing milk for several hours.

- 8 cups whole milk
- 2½ cups sugar
- ⅛ tsp. saffron
- 1 tsp. rosewater

- 8 cardamom pods, cracked
- ¼ cup (1¼ oz.) all-purpose flour, sifted
- ¼ cup semolina flour
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- 3 tbsp. ghee or clarified butter, plus more for frying
- 1 tbsp. plain yogurt
- 1 egg

**1** Bring milk to a boil in a 4-qt. nonstick pan. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, stirring, until very thick, about 5 hours. You should have 1½ cups of thickened milk; let cool to room temperature.

**2** Bring sugar, saffron, rosewater, cardamom, and 1¾ cups water to a boil in a 1-qt. saucepan. Cook, stirring, until sugar dissolves, 8–10 minutes; let cool.

**3** Combine thickened milk, the flours, and baking powder in bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment; mix. Add ghee, yogurt, and egg; continue to beat until dough forms. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside for 10 minutes.

**4** Heat 2" ghee in a 6-qt. pan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 275°.

Using wet hands, divide dough into 16 pieces; roll into balls. Working in batches, fry, stirring to keep donuts submerged until cooked through, 12–15 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to paper towels to drain briefly; transfer hot donuts to syrup and let soak for at least 30 minutes before serving.

### Spudnuts

**MAKES ABOUT 11**

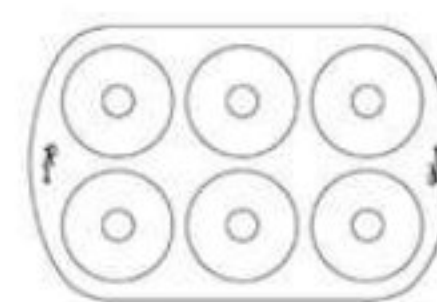
To ensure these potato-based donuts (pictured on [page 61](#)) turn out pillowy and soft after frying, take care not to overwork the dough.

- 1 large russet potato (about 10 oz.), peeled and cut into 1" pieces
- 2 cups (9 oz.) all-purpose flour, sifted, plus more for dusting
- 1½ tsp. baking powder
- 1½ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- ½ tsp. ground mace
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ¼ cup milk
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tsp. grated lemon zest
- Canola oil, for frying

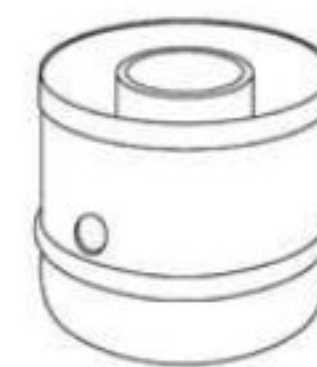
## SIX TOOLS FOR MAKING DONUTS



**Maverick Digital Oil & Candy Thermometer** There is little margin for error when frying donuts; this precise model beeps at the desired temperature. A splashguard keeps the LCD screen clean.



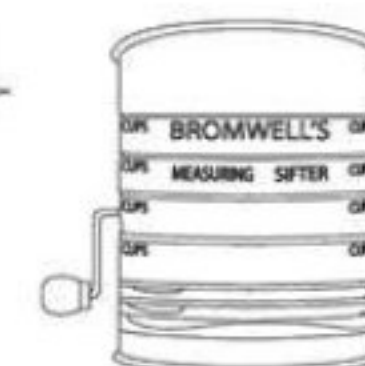
**Wilton Donut Pan** When baking donuts, a thick, nonstick pan is imperative. Wilton's three-quarter-inch-deep wells conduct heat evenly for clean shapes that are easy to flip. Cake donuts also do well in this pan.



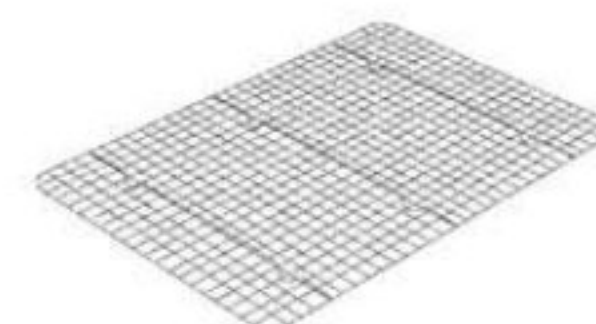
**Rochow Donut Cutter** The most iconic donut shape, the ring, isn't easy to achieve. When lightly tapped on a work surface, this electroplate-finished steel cutter releases perfect hoops and holes every time.



**Saibashi Cooking Chopsticks** To avoid puncturing the donuts, we use long chopsticks to flip them when frying. These 13-inch bamboo sticks stay cool and are attached with string for easy use.



**Jacob Bromwell Sifter** This hand-cranked sifter, with its strong stainless steel body and generous five-cup capacity, makes quick work of sifting flour and aerating confectioners' sugar for glazes.



**Chicago Metallic Wire Cooling Rack** A paper towel-lined baking sheet is fine for cooling just-fried foods, but this elevated, nonstick wire rack really speeds up the process. See [THE PANTRY](#) on [page 92](#).





From top: Donnie Bulloch of Old Fashioned Donuts in Chicago; spudnuts (see [page 60](#) for a recipe)





2

4

9

3

13

12

5

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11

8



# Glorious Glazes

Glossy chocolate with hairline cracks; a shimmering cherry pink surface; a slick drape of caramel: Some might say it's the glaze that makes the donut. When making donuts at home, it's good to keep that in mind—a plain yeasted or cake donut is a canvas that's infinitely customizable, and glaze adds both color and flavor with the ease of a dunk. An icing meant for dipping, not spreading, glaze is thin enough to create a uniform seal that acts as a preservative, and keeps the pastry moist and fresh. For an inspired take on a classic icing, try marshmallow **1** glaze, a twist on vanilla, and milk chocolatey Irish cream **2**, a riff on plain chocolate. Distinctive flavors such as amaretto cherry **3** and hazelnut **4** truly shine when coating a plain yeast donut. Tangy flavors, such as cream cheese icing **5** and orange glaze **6** made with fresh zest, juice, and liqueur are ideal foils for a rich strawberry fonut (see page 54 for a recipe). Chocolate glaze gains sophistication with dark chocolate ganache **7**, mocha **8**, and white chocolate-cardamom **9** variations. Grate the chocolate when making the glaze so it melts smoothly when whisked with the liquid. Particularly sweet flavors, such as dulce de leche **10**, or potent ones, such as boozy limoncello **11**, work well in small doses as a coating for donut holes. No matter what glaze you choose, be it sugary maple **12** or intense matcha green tea **13**, keep the following tips in mind: Make the glaze when you plan to use it, to avoid it losing moisture while sitting out. If your glaze does get dry, stir in one tablespoon of water at a time until the consistency is restored. Sifting the confectioners' sugar is a nice extra step to ensure a smooth, satiny texture. If you want to achieve a generous bakery-quality coating, double the glaze recipe to guarantee plentiful dipping from the first donut to the last. Always make sure donuts are cool before you glaze them. Otherwise the icing will melt into the crust and make the donut soggy. If you're using sprinkles or other toppings, apply them while the glaze is wet so they adhere. Once you're done, let the glaze set until it's dry, about 30 minutes. Your patience will be rewarded. —*Eliza Martin*



*Wait to glaze your donuts until they have cooled to room temperature. Covering a hot donut with glaze will trap the heat and steam, making it soggy. In addition to adding flavor, the glaze preserves the freshness of each donut.*

**1** Boil potato pieces in a 2-qt. pan of salted water until tender, 18–20 minutes. Drain; pass through a ricer into a bowl. Whisk flour, powder,  $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp. salt,  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. pepper, and mace in a bowl; set aside. Combine potato,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup sugar, eggs, milk, butter, and zest in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment; beat until smooth. With motor running, slowly add dry ingredients and mix. Let dough rest 10 minutes.

**2** Combine remaining salt, pepper, and sugar in a bowl; set aside. Heat 2" oil in a 6-qt. pan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 370°. On a lightly floured surface, using your hands, pat dough into a 10" round about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick. Using a floured 3" donut cutter, cut out donuts; gather and reuse scraps. Working in batches, place donuts in oil. Cook, flipping once, until puffed and golden, 3–4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a baking sheet with a wire rack; let cool completely. Toss in sugar mixture.

## GLAZES

### Amaretto Cherry Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS

- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup maraschino cherry syrup (from the jar)
- 1 tbsp. amaretto liqueur
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. kosher salt

Whisk sugar, syrup, liqueur, and salt in a bowl until smooth.

### Cream Cheese Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- $\frac{1}{2}$  vanilla bean, split lengthwise, seeds scraped and reserved
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. kosher salt
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar

Using a mixer, beat together cream cheese, vanilla seeds, and 2 tbsp. hot water. Add salt and sugar; mix.

### Dark Chocolate Ganache Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

- 8 oz. dark chocolate, grated
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 tbsp. unsalted butter

Mix chocolate, sugar, vanilla, and salt in a bowl. Bring cream and butter to a boil in a 1-qt. saucepan. Pour cream over chocolate; let sit for 2 minutes without stirring. Whisk until smooth; chill until thick.

### Dulce de Leche Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup evaporated milk
- 1 cup sweetened condensed milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup heavy cream
- 2 tsp. cornstarch
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. ground cinnamon

Bring milks, cream, cornstarch, and cinnamon to a boil in a 1-qt. nonstick pan. Reduce heat to low; cook, stirring, until deep caramel in color and thick, about 2 hours. Pass through a strainer into a bowl; cool.

### Hazelnut Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS

- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 2 tbsp. hazelnut liqueur
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Nutella

Whisk sugar, liqueur, and salt in a bowl until smooth. Whisk Nutella and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup hot water in a bowl until soft, then whisk into sugar mixture.

### Irish Cream Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS

- 3 oz. milk chocolate, grated
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup Irish cream liqueur

Whisk chocolate, sugar, and salt in a bowl. Bring liqueur and 2 tbsp. water to a boil in a 1-qt. pan. Pour over chocolate; let sit 2 minutes without stirring, then whisk until smooth.

### Limoncello Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice, plus 1 tbsp. finely grated zest
- 2 tbsp. lemon liqueur, such as limoncello
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. kosher salt

Whisk sugar, juice, zest, liqueur, and salt in a bowl until smooth.

### Maple Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS

- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup maple syrup
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. kosher salt

Whisk sugar, syrup, cream, and salt

in a bowl until smooth.

### Marshmallow Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. kosher salt
- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 cups mini marshmallows

Mix sugar, vanilla, and salt in a bowl. Melt butter and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water in a 2-qt. nonstick pan over medium-high heat. Add marshmallows; stir until completely melted, 1–2 minutes. Whisk into sugar mixture.

### Matcha Green Tea Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tbsp. matcha green tea powder (see [page 92](#))

Whisk sugar, powder, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup boiling water in a bowl until smooth.

### Mocha Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS

- 8 oz. semisweet chocolate, grated
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups confectioners' sugar
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. kosher salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup heavy cream
- 2 tbsp. instant espresso powder

Mix chocolate, sugar, and salt in a bowl; set aside. Bring cream and powder to a boil in a 1-qt. pan. Remove from heat; pour over chocolate. Let sit for 2 minutes without stirring, then whisk until smooth.

### Orange Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 3 tbsp. fresh orange juice, plus 1 tbsp. finely grated zest
- 1 tbsp. orange liqueur
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. kosher salt

Whisk sugar, juice, zest, liqueur, and salt in a bowl until smooth.

### White Chocolate-Cardamom Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- 8 oz. white chocolate, grated
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 tsp. ground cardamom
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup heavy cream

Mix chocolate, sugar, cardamom, vanilla, and salt in a bowl. Bring cream to a boil in a 1-qt. pan. Pour cream over chocolate; let sit for 2 minutes without stirring, then whisk until smooth. Chill until thick.

## FIVE OILS FOR FRYING

When frying dozens of donuts in the *SAVEUR* test kitchen, we gave serious thought to the oils we were using. **Canola** was our go-to oil for its neutral flavor, good value, and high smoke point—the temperature at which the fat starts to break down. It worked equally well for cake, yeast, and extruded donuts such as crullers. There are other fats, however, that are suitable for deep-frying, and we tested a few. **Vegetable shortening** and **lard** are both saturated fats that stay solid at room temperature. We loved frying our yeast-raised donuts in them; they acquired an especially crisp skin in the shortening and a savory flavor from the lard. Most striking was how much faster these fats rose to temperature and rebounded between batches than any of the others. The remaining oils we tried had smoke points comparable to that of canola oil, but each created slightly different results. **Peanut oil** imparted the darkest color of the bunch, giving the donuts a slightly nutty taste that we found complementary to the sweetness of the confections. **Safflower oil** was the most like canola, frying greaseless donuts at a slightly longer cook time with the cleanest flavor of them all. —Sahar Siddiqi







Old-fashioned spiced sour cream donuts  
(see [page 56](#) for a recipe)



# Capital of HEAT

A LOVER OF FIERY  
CUISINE FINDS  
HIS SHANGRI-LA  
IN THE CITY OF  
CHENGDU, CHINA

BY MATT GROSS  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARIANA LINDQUIST

Sichuan University students enjoy a meal at Shu Zi Xiang, a hot pot restaurant in Chengdu.









I was walking down a narrow street in the suburbs of Chengdu, the capital of China's Sichuan province, when I spotted what I'd been hoping to spot for days: a tricycle. No ordinary conveyance, this; it was a mobile food vendor of the sort that specialized in *dou hua*, super-soft tofu drenched in black vinegar and chile-infused oil, topped with scallions, peanuts, pickled turnips, and fried shallots. The vendor ladled tofu from a basin in the back of the trike into a little plastic bowl, seasoned it, and handed it to me. With a thin plastic

spoon, I scooped up a bite and put it in my mouth. Heaven. The tofu was warm and silky, with a hint of smoke, against which the garnishes were a rainbow of salty, sour, pungent contrast. Far too soon, my bowl was empty.

It was then that I noticed my tongue was on fire, burning with the heat of a thousand chiles, a spiciness known in Mandarin as *la*. I felt droplets of sweat form on my cheeks. The spice swelled and pulsed. Behind the *la* was a citric flavor and a numbing sensation that tingled the sides of my tongue; it at once protected me from the power of the chiles and, somehow, increased my sensitivity to it. This was *ma*, the effect produced by Sichuan peppercorns, called *hua jiao* in Mandarin—little dusky pink fireballs that are actually the dried seed husks of the prickly ash tree (see “Little Balls of Fire,” [page 72](#)).

Those two flavors—*ma* and *la*, Sichuan's signature combination—were precisely what I'd come to Chengdu looking for. See, I'm a chile fiend. My pantry features an entire section devoted to dried peppers from Thailand, China, Mexico, India, Kenya, and Israel, and my refrigerator shelves sag with unlabeled bottles of homemade hot sauces. I'm neither macho nor masochistic, and while I could lecture you on Scoville units, capsaicin, and endorphins, I'll keep it simple: I think heat makes food taste better.

In this regard, the food of Sichuan has always held a talismanic appeal for me, ever since my first taste of truly authentic Sichuan cooking at a restaurant in Taipei a decade ago. No other cuisine, to my mind, makes such liberal use of chiles while at the same time achieving such complexity and balance. For years I sought out Sichuan food wherever I could find it—in New York, in Los Angeles, and beyond, chasing that chile-fied buzz. Finally, I resolved to visit the heat at its source. But while I'd come in pursuit of *ma la*, once here, I found that this famous spiciness is but one piece of a multifaceted cuisine. Among the Chinese, this southwestern province is considered the home of the country's most sophisticated food, a place where cooks are known to unite strikingly disparate flavors (see “Flavors of Sichuan,” [page 71](#)) in a single harmonious dish. Today the nexus of this cuisine is Chengdu.

THE CITY OF 14 MILLION INHABITANTS lies on a vast fertile plain some 50 miles east of the Tibetan plateau foothills. Chengdu sits virtually in the center of the province, a circumstance that aided the city's rise; it was in Chengdu's teahouses that silk traders and traveling officials lingered on their journeys, lending the city a sensual, cosmopolitan air. Nowadays that legacy expresses itself in a vibrant, even

frenetic, food culture, which recently earned Chengdu a UNESCO “City of Gastronomy” designation, the first in Asia.

Chengdu has its share of overdevelopment, with skyscrapers replacing quaint downtown neighborhoods and cookie-cutter housing developments sprawling into the distance, but even so, the city possesses a laid-back vibe that stands in contrast to the world-ruling auras of Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Hong Kong. As soon as I arrived, I checked into a hostel near the city center, and proceeded to eat my way across town.

In the early morning hours of my first full day in the city, when the streets around the hostel were serene, I went for a run, skirting the edge of People's Square, Chengdu's geographical center, until I reached the banks of the mist-shrouded Jinjiang River, one of four waterways that interlace the city. As I crossed bridges, I dodged grandmothers returning from crack-of-dawn market excursions, lugging jugs of rapeseed oil, used for frying, and shopping bags overflowing with greens. On my way back, I bought pork buns from a little shop called Hanbaozi. Through its wide take-out window, I could see cooks stuffing soft white wheat-flour buns with ground pork seasoned liberally with Sichuan peppercorns. With every bun I ate, that tingly numbness—the *ma*—crept farther across my tongue and palate. An order of four buns, plus a glass of warm soy milk, made a very good breakfast.

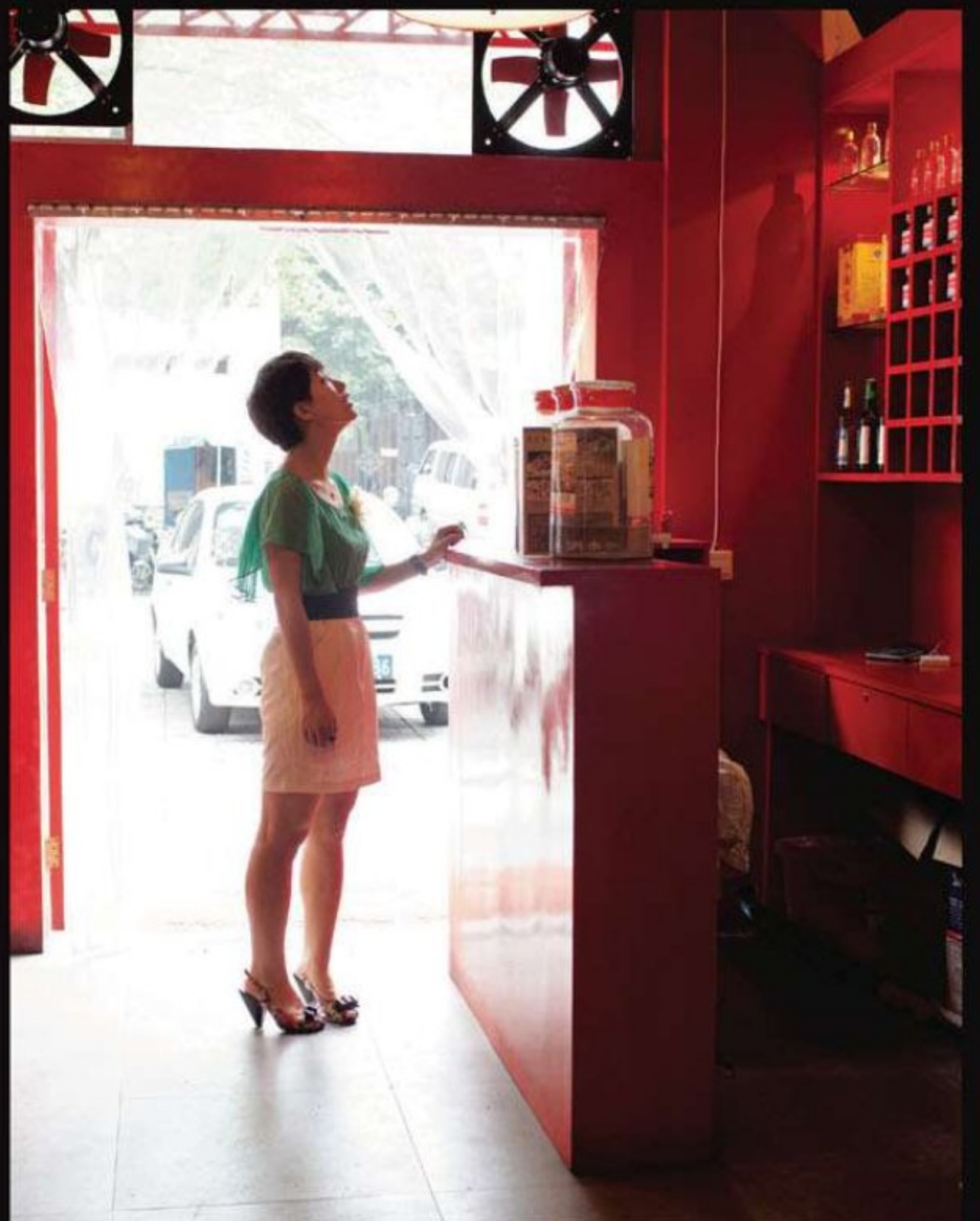
Or a good *first* breakfast. After I showered, I wandered over to Chunyangguan, one of the city's myriad noodle shops, where dozens of wooden tables and chairs were set out in front of a low concrete building. By nine o'clock, nearly all were filled with customers. I sat down, and the *laoban*, or boss, came over to take my order. With my limited Mandarin, I asked for what everyone else seemed to be having: *yu xiang pai gu mian*, or fish-fragrant sparerib noodles. In moments I was slurping down a bowl of thin white wheat noodles nestled in a dark broth tinged red with chile oil and studded with nuggets of spareribs. A dash of black vinegar added a note of sharpness.

Fish-fragrant sparerib noodles, it is important to know, do not smell or taste like fish. Rather, “fish-fragrant,” as I learned from the *laoban*, a no-nonsense middle-aged former salesman who introduced himself as Ma Yingjun—Handsome Ma—refers to the ingredients typically used in cooking fish here: garlic, ginger, scallions, and, often, pickled chiles. Fish-fragrant dishes are frequently stir-fried, but Handsome Ma's *yu xiang pai gu mian* was more complicated, (*continued on* [page 72](#))

**Clockwise from top left: a girl eats *bing fen*, a dessert of bean-starch jelly and sweet syrup; Sichuan pork wontons (see [page 76](#) for a recipe); a customer at Tian Ci Liang Ji restaurant; fermenting beans and chiles at the Museum of Sichuan Cuisine in Pixian County**

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Stir-fried pork belly with Chinese chives (see page 76 for a recipe)



# Flavors of SICHUAN

Bold and pungent ingredients create the complex, contrasting flavors for which Sichuan is famous. In Chengdu, where chiles have pride of place, cooks commonly use five varieties: tiny but intense **xiao mi la** ⑳ chiles; sweet little **hong mei ren** ⑥ (“red beauty”) chiles, which deliver waves of herbal fire; fast-attacking **chao tian jiao** ⑬ (“heaven facing chiles”); **erjingtiao** ⑫, with a heat that hits the back of your mouth; and **ye shan jiao** ④ (“wild mountain peppers”), slender chiles with a lingering floral burn. **Dou-ban jiang** ① (sometimes labeled toban djan), a maroon paste made from fermented broad beans and dried chiles, adds a rich, spicy, umami flavor to countless Sichuanese dishes. Salted black **dou chi** ⑰, dry fermented soybeans, are prized for their savory depth, while **ya cai** ③, a crunchy, salty pickle made from chopped mustard greens, is used as a condiment and to flavor stir-fries. **Tian mian jiang** ⑩, a smooth paste of wheat flour and a variety of spices, adds salty-sweet raisiny notes to stir-fries and sauces. The spice mix known as **lu**—typically composed of cloves, **fennel seeds** ②, **star anise** ⑦, **cassia or cinnamon** ⑭, and black cardamom-like **cao guo** ⑮—is used all over China to season braising liquids; in Sichuan it also gives complexity to home-made **hong you** ⑧, or red chile oil (see page 76 for a recipe). Tender, mild **young ginger** ⑤ is peeled, thinly sliced, and eaten in stir-fries and noodle dishes, while older, fibrous **mature ginger** ⑪ is crushed and used skin-on to bring a bright flavor to braises. Several varieties of **garlic** ⑨ are ubiquitous in Sichuan cookery, while Chinese scallions known as **suan miao** ⑲ are finely chopped for garnishes. **Lao chou** ⑱, or dark soy sauce, thicker and less salty than regular soy sauce, has a complex, slightly sweet flavor; it’s used to enrich sauces and marinades. Finally, **Chinkiang black vinegar** ⑯ made from fermenting rice, wheat, millet, or sorghum—provides a sweet-tart balance to stir-fries, dips, and noodle dishes. (See The Pantry, page 92, for hard-to-find ingredients.) —M.G.



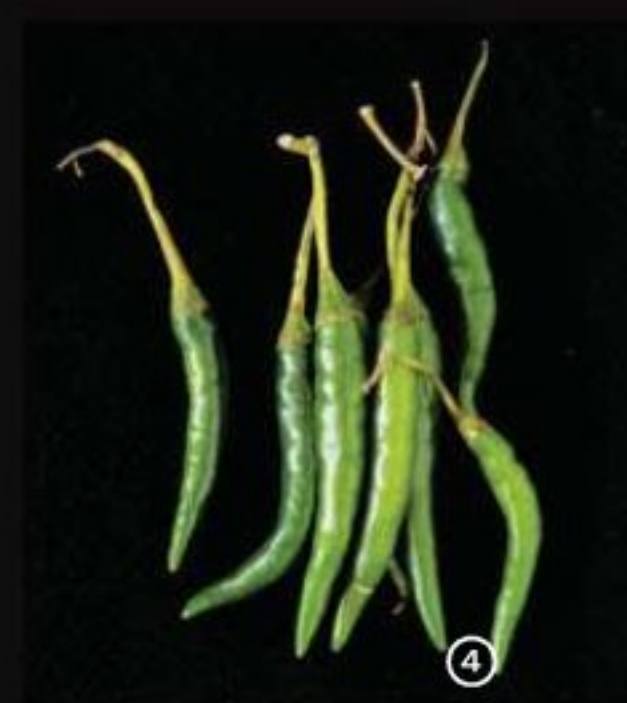
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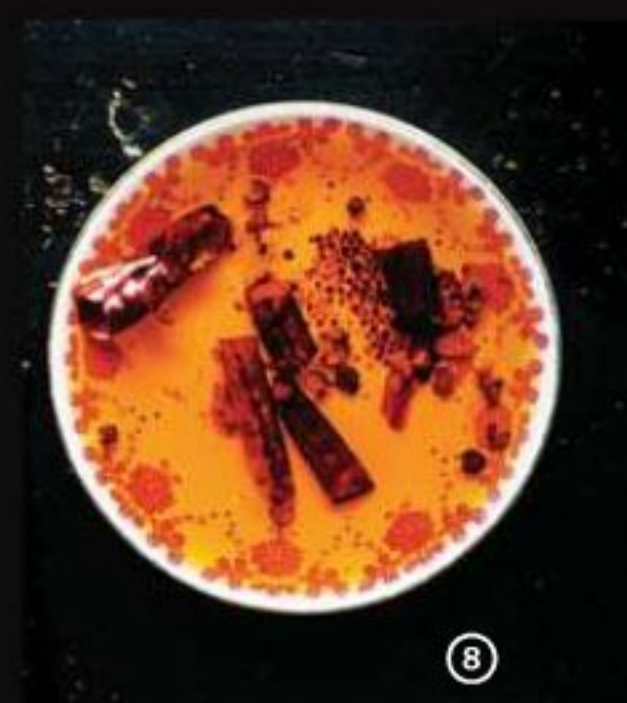
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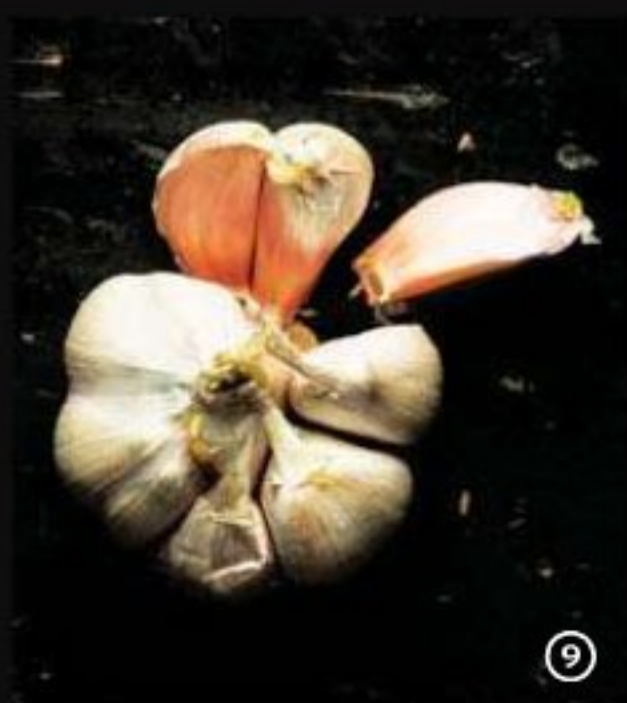
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⑳



# This was my first taste of how meals worked in Chengdu. For every complicated dish there was an accompaniment of mellow yet **TRANSCENDENT FLAVOR**

(continued from page 68) beginning with a stir-fry and segueing into a long braise. The aromatic dish, an invention of Handsome Ma's, blew me away. I slurped through the bowl in seconds. Then I looked around at the neighboring tables to see what else to try.

The next thing I spotted was a small bowl filled with steamed egg custard, topped with a spoonful of ground pork and chopped *ya cai* (pickled mustard greens). The egg itself was preternaturally light and creamy, and when I asked Handsome Ma how it was done, I couldn't believe the simplicity of the preparation: just eggs, beaten and steamed. They offset the noodles perfectly.

This combination was my first taste of how meals worked in Chengdu. For every complicated, labor-intensive dish, such as the fish-fragrant noodles or Handsome Ma's excellent *hong you chao shou* (spicy pork wontons in red chile oil), there was an accompaniment that involved just two or three ingredients of mellow yet transcendent flavor. This balancing act took place in meal after meal. Later that afternoon in a suburb of Chengdu, I ventured a taste of *ma la* rabbit heads, a surprisingly delectable treat that was possibly the spiciest and most complexly flavored thing I'd ever eaten, and it, too, was paired with a simple porridge of rice and purple sweet potatoes—wonderful.

I spent the next day exploring Chengdu's many neighborhood markets, studying the local chiles. The varieties were mind-boggling: I found *xiao mi la*, a sharp-tasting hot pepper reminiscent of a Thai bird's-eye chile that infuses braises with vivid heat; *chao tian jiao*, or "heaven facing chiles," used sun-dried, wok-toasted, and then coarsely ground; *erjingtiao*, deep green or red peppers that are pickled and minced for a mildly spicy seasoning; *ye shan jiao*, chiles ranging from purple to green in color that grow wild in the mountains; and more.

Given the abundance of chiles here, I found it hard to believe that people in Sichuan only really started cooking with them in the 19th century, 300 or so years after they were first imported from the New World.

The fact is, chiles were just one felicitous addition to an ancient cuisine that has always placed great value on bold flavors. Before chiles arrived, cooks often paired Sichuan peppercorns with the sour red fruit of the Japanese Cornelian cherry tree. Chiles, when they finally came along, must have felt something like the missing piece of a very old puzzle.

Chiles are also a key ingredient in another bedrock element of Sichuan cooking, *douban jiang*, a powerful dark red fermented paste of *erjingtiao* chiles and broad beans that is responsible for the deep umami flavor and penetrating heat in dishes such as Sichuan's famous *mapo* tofu, tofu and ground beef or pork braised in a fiery ruby red sauce. Chile bean pastes of various types are produced all over China, but the best, I was told, come from Pixian County, just outside of Chengdu.

To learn more about the chile paste, I paid a visit to Pixian County's Museum of Sichuan Cuisine, where I beheld, sitting outside in the courtyard, row upon row of open-topped clay pots containing fermenting chiles and beans on their way to becoming *douban jiang*. A manager of the museum's classical collections, Ding Shibing, explained why Pixian is ideally suited for producing the ingredient. In other parts of the country, chile bean paste makers regularly have to add water to their fermenting product to replace moisture lost to evaporation. Not in Pixian, where the ancient irrigation system that turned Sichuan basin into an exceptionally fertile area—a marvel of hydraulic engineering completed in 256 B.C. and still in use—helps to maintain sufficient ground humidity to keep the paste from drying out as it ages. Dujiangyan, as the vast network of canals is named, not only ensures the country's best *douban jiang*, but earned Sichuan the enduring moniker, the Land of Plenty.

Chengdu people take that to heart. They make the most of their

**Clockwise from bottom left: Sichuan peppercorns; pickled chiles; triple-cooked spareribs with chiles (see page 76 for a recipe); customers enjoy noodles and other snacks on Jinli Street near Wuhou Shrine.**



## LITTLE BALLS OF FIRE

Sichuan peppercorns, responsible for *ma*, the buzzing, tingling sensation that is one of Sichuan cuisine's most distinctive characteristics, are not related to pepper at all but consist of the dried rinds of tiny fruits from a small thorny tree in the citrus family known as prickly ash. The spice's pins-and-needles effect—a phenomenon that scientists refer to as paresthesia—comes from compounds known as sanshools, which suffuse the dusky pink rinds. Sanshools are similar in structure to other pungent compounds (most notably piperine in black pepper and capsaicin in chiles) but behave very differently. "Sanshools chemically activate nerves that are usually only triggered mechanically, by physical touch and cold temperatures," says Bruce Bryant, a senior research associate at Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia. "Your brain interprets that as a tactile sensation that feels like the tingling when you're coming back from local anesthesia." But the peppercorns, when consumed in measured amounts, don't really numb the palate; in actuality, that tingling feeling increases our sensitivity to other tastes and flavors. And because sanshools and the capsaicin in chiles act on different systems of nerves, the two sensations—peppercorn tingling and chile spiciness—can be experienced in tandem, creating Sichuan's signature *ma la* combination. Cooks in Chengdu take full advantage of this, using the Sichuan peppercorns in combination with hot chiles to create dishes of hair-curling heat and vividness. —Karen Shimizu

TODD COLEMAN (SICHUAN PEPPERCORNS)









A cook at Tian Ci Liang Ji, a Chengdu restaurant specializing in chicken dishes



bounty and the remarkable local larder it yields—not just chiles and those peppercorns but a cornucopia of fruits, cultivated and wild vegetables, and more. They are as obsessed with food as you’d imagine for a people whose native poets immortalized the cuisine (11th-century bard Su Dongpo on fatty pork: “Simmer slowly/With a little water”). These poets have contemporary counterparts in characters like “Super Piggy,” one of Chengdu’s many food bloggers.

“I AM A SICHUANESSE MAN. If I am not eating something, I must be thinking about what to eat,” said Super Piggy, whose real name is Xu Yun, when I met him for lunch one day. We were eating offal, beloved in Sichuan, at Ming Ting, one of Chengdu’s “fly restaurants,” bare-bones eateries said to attract diners like flies. Over lunch—pigs’ brains braised with tofu and *douban jiang*; pigs’ kidneys stir-fried with a mountain of chives—Yun, a trim man in his mid-30s, waxed philosophical, quoting Plato as easily as Chinese poets. As our conversation turned to the cooking of Chengdu, he said that if I really wanted to experience the city’s cuisine, I’d best get into the kitchens of its home cooks.

The next day, I visited Yun’s father, Xu Shengguo, a retired engineer who’d cooked for his family for decades. With practiced efficiency, Shengguo whipped up *hui guo rou*, pork belly stir-fried with chile paste, *dou chi* (salty, black fermented soybeans), and garlic scallions. As the ingredients sizzled, the chile smoke rising from the pan nearly made me sneeze. Shengguo also produced *yu xiang you cai*, using the fish-fragrant technique on rape greens. He finished by making *ma yi shang shu*, literally, “ants climbing a tree,” a homely dish of glass noodles stir-fried with ground pork. We sat and dug in, and between the crisp and spicy pork belly, the tender and slightly bitter *you cai*, and the slippery glass noodles, the meal was as complex and balanced as anything I’d eaten out in the city. But it was also casual, just Papa Piggy preparing dishes he knew intimately and riffing on classics. At home, it seemed, Sichuan cuisine was a style, an approach that encouraged innovation, not a rigid canon. I was bowled over.

I spent the rest of my stay seeking out invitations to eat in people’s homes, where I encountered this deliciously freewheeling approach to cooking, grounded in the basic flavors of Sichuan but relaxed and improvisational, again and again. One evening Guo Wei-Wei, a young dimple-cheeked writer, had me over to dinner at her brand-new apartment, where she broke down a five-pound rooster, fried some of the meat with shredded young ginger and chiles, and stewed the rest of it with carrots and *douban jiang*, yielding one chicken two ways—both of them delicious.

On my last night in Chengdu, I went to a dinner party hosted by Ivy Hui, an avid home cook. When I arrived, Hui was preparing sweet and sour fried meatballs made from not just pork but, of all things in landlocked Chengdu, oysters, which lent an ingenious note of brine. Hui also served spareribs that had been braised in *lu*—a mix of spices such as cassia, star anise, and fennel seed—and then deep-fried and tossed in a hot wok with generous handfuls of *xiao mi la* chiles. The ribs had a complex flavor that combined the must of a spice market, the fatty punch of barbecue, and a penetrating heat—a masterfully Sichuanese balance of power.

As I devoured the spareribs I could feel the familiar heat—the *ma* and *la* that had brought me here—rising in my face. With my chopsticks I plucked a slice of raw cucumber from a plate and crunched it in my mouth. A counterpoint to the frenzy of flavors that surrounded it, the cool vegetable quieted my palate just long enough before the chiles beckoned once again. 🐷

## TRAVEL GUIDE CHENGDU

For more information on visiting Chengdu, visit the City of Chengdu’s website, [www.chengdu.gov.cn/echengdu](http://www.chengdu.gov.cn/echengdu), or [ChengduLiving.com](http://ChengduLiving.com).

**Dinner for two with drinks and tip**  
**Inexpensive: Under \$25**

### WHERE TO STAY

#### Loft Design Hostel

4 Xiaotong Alley, Qingyang District (86/28/8626-5770; [lofthostel.com](http://lofthostel.com)). Rates: \$10 for a shared room, \$34 for a private room. A converted printing house, the Loft is filled with a lively mix of guests, from Chinese students to wandering foreigners. Bike rentals for hostel guests make it easy to explore the city center.

#### Hakka Homes

(86/139/8190-9901; [hakkahomes.com](http://hakkahomes.com)). Rates: \$28 for a two-bedroom apartment. A collection of short-term rental apartments—from studios to two-bedrooms, each with a kitchen—in a lively part of the city near Sichuan University.

#### Shangri-La Chengdu Hotel

9 Binjiang East Road, Jinjiang District (86/28/8888-9999; [shangri-la.com/chengdu/shangrila](http://shangri-la.com/chengdu/shangrila)). Rates: \$200 for a double. This luxurious tower on the banks of the Jinjiang River is easily the nicest place to stay in Chengdu. The hotel’s upscale restaurant, Shang Palace, features classic Sichuan dishes, including a richly flavored *mapo* tofu.

### WHERE TO EAT

#### Chunyangguan

6 Jixiang Street, Qingyang District (no phone). Inexpensive. This nook is packed every morning with folks wolfing down owner Handsome Ma’s *yu xiang pai gu mian* (fish-fragrant sparerib noodles) and wontons in chile oil.

#### Ming Ting

30 Yijiefang, Waicaojia Alley (86/28/8331-5978). Inexpensive. This so-called “five-star fly restaurant” made its name with pig’s brain *mapo* tofu and other offal dishes but also makes a spicy *heye jiang rou*, bacon steamed in lotus leaves.

#### Shu Zi Xiang

Multiple locations ([shuzixiang.com](http://shuzixiang.com)). Inexpensive. Chengdu people love hot pot—a boiling cauldron of spicy broth in which you dunk and cook a variety of meats and vegetables—and Shu Zi Xiang makes some of the most flavorful.

#### Orange

128 Farming Unit 1, Sansheng Township, Hongsha Village (86/28/8467-8067; [douban.com/people/orange-bar](http://douban.com/people/orange-bar)). Inexpensive. On weekends many residents of Chengdu head to the countryside for leisurely meals at *nongjiale*, or farmhouse restaurants. Orange is one of the best; try the *suan ni bai rou*, sliced pork belly dressed with garlic and chiles.

#### Tian Ci Liang Ji

Ma An Jie No. 68, Jin Niu Qu (86/28/8333-3288). Inexpensive. This popular restaurant is famous for its many chicken dishes, flavored with chiles and Sichuan peppercorns. In winter, be sure to try *ren shen ji tang*, a delicious chicken soup with ginseng and wolfberries.



### WHAT TO DO

#### Museum of Sichuan Cuisine

8 Ronghua North Alley, Gucheng Village, Pixian County (86/28/8791-8008; [www.cdccbwg.com](http://www.cdccbwg.com)). Admission: \$3. A short drive from downtown Chengdu, this museum, a grand structure encompassing exhibitions as well as a decent restaurant, offers a serious look at the history of Sichuan food from ancient times to the modern era.

#### Wuhou Shrine

231 Wuhou Shrine Street (86/28/8555-9027, [wuhouci.net.cn](http://wuhouci.net.cn)). This shrine to a royal adviser is a beloved piece of Chengdu history—and Jinli Street, which leads up to the ancient sanctuary, has dozens of food vendors serving Chengdu-only snacks such as *dou hua*, soft tofu topped with chili oil, black vinegar, peanuts, and scallions. —M.G.



## Chao Shou

(Sichuan Pork Wontons)

MAKES ABOUT 40 WONTONS

The recipe for these tasty pork wontons (pictured on page 69) is from noodle shop owner Ma Yingjun. See page 71 for information on hard-to-find ingredients.

- 1½ lb. ground pork
- 3 tbsp. cornstarch
- 2 tbsp. dry sherry
- 2 tbsp. light soy sauce
- 1 tbsp. Chinese rice wine
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 4" piece ginger, peeled and minced
- 40 3½"-square wonton wrappers
- 1 egg, beaten
- Kosher salt, to taste
- ½ cup hong you (Sichuan red chile oil; see recipe below, or use store-bought), plus more for serving
- 2 tbsp. Chinkiang black vinegar, plus more for serving

**1** Mix pork, cornstarch, sherry, soy, wine, garlic, and ginger in a bowl. Working with 1 wrapper at a time, place ½ tbsp. filling in center, brush edges with egg, and fold in half, forming a triangle; overlap opposite corners, brushing with egg to seal together. Repeat with remaining wrappers and pork mixture; set aside.

**2** Bring a large pot of salted water to boil over high heat; working in batches, cook wontons until firm and cooked through, 5–7 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to paper towels to drain, and place in a bowl; season with salt and toss with red chile oil and vinegar. Serve additional red chile oil and vinegar on the side, if you like.

## Hong You

(Sichuan Red Chile Oil)

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

This ruby red chile- and spice-infused oil (pictured on page 71) is a key ingredient in all kinds of Sichuan dishes. See page 71 for information on hard-to-find ingredients.

- 2 cups canola oil
- 4 star anise
- 3 cloves garlic, smashed
- 3 cao guo or black cardamom pods
- 3 whole cloves
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 stick cinnamon, broken in half
- 1 3" piece ginger, smashed
- 1 cup (about 32) chiles de árbol, stemmed and chopped

- 3 tbsp. Sichuan peppercorns
- 1 tbsp. light soy sauce
- ½ tsp. kosher salt

Heat oil, star anise, garlic, cardamom, cloves, bay, cinnamon, and ginger in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium heat; cook, stirring occasionally, until garlic is golden, 15–20 minutes. Transfer to a 1-qt. glass jar with chiles, peppercorns, soy, and salt; let cool to room temperature. Using a slotted spoon, remove and discard garlic and ginger; seal jar and let sit at least 24 hours. To use, strain oil, discarding solids. Store refrigerated up to 3 months.

## Hui Guo Rou

(Stir-fried Pork Belly with Chinese Chives)

SERVES 2–4

Two kinds of bean paste give this hearty stir-fry of crisp pork belly and chives (pictured on page 70) a deeply umami flavor. See page 71 for information on hard-to-find ingredients.

- 1½ lb. skin-on pork belly
- 3 cups canola oil
- ⅓ cup hong you (Sichuan red chile oil; see recipe below left, or use store-bought)
- 2 tbsp. douban jiang (Chinese red chile bean paste)
- 2 tbsp. dou chi (Chinese fermented black soybeans)
- 4 tsp. tian mian jiang (Chinese sweet bean paste)
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 10 suan miao (Chinese chives, blossoms discarded) or scallions, sliced into 1" pieces
- Steamed rice, for serving

**1** Bring pork and 12 cups water to a boil in a 6-qt. saucepan over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and cover; cook until pork is tender when pierced with a knife, 1–1½ hours. Transfer pork to an ice bath. Drain, dry completely with paper towels, and slice very thinly crosswise into ⅛" pieces; set aside.

**2** Heat oil in a 14" flat-bottomed wok to 350°. Add pork; cook until brown and slightly crisp, about 12 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer pork to a bowl; set aside.

**3** Discard canola oil. Add red chile oil to wok; heat over medium-high heat. Add paste, beans, sauce, and sugar; cook, stirring constantly, until sugar dissolves, about 1 minute. Add reserved pork and chives; cook, stirring constantly, until chives are

wilted, about 3 minutes more. Serve with rice.

## Lu Rou

(Triple-Cooked Spareribs with Chiles)

SERVES 4

These lavishly spiced ribs (pictured on page 73) are based on a recipe from Chengdu home cook Ivy Hui. See page 71 for information on hard-to-find ingredients.

- 2 lb. pork spareribs, cut into 3" pieces
- 2 cups Chinese rice wine
- 2 tbsp. Chinese five-spice powder
- ¾ cups canola oil
- 10 cloves garlic, 4 sliced, and 6 minced
- 1 8" piece peeled ginger (3" sliced into "coins," 5" minced)
- 4 dried chiles de árbol
- 3 tbsp. fennel seeds
- 5 star anise
- 2 sticks cinnamon, broken in half
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 4 xiao mi la or red Thai chiles, stemmed and sliced
- 2 erjingtiao or green Thai chiles, stemmed and sliced
- ⅓ cup hong you (Sichuan red chile oil; see recipe far left, or use store-bought)
- Steamed rice, for serving

**1** Mix spareribs, wine, and five-spice powder in a bowl; cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

**2** The next day, drain ribs, discarding liquid, and transfer to a 6-qt. saucepan. Cover with water by 2"; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook until slightly tender, 3–5 minutes, and drain. Set aside.

**3** Heat ¼ cup canola oil in a 14" flat-bottomed wok over medium-high heat. Add sliced garlic and ginger, dried chiles, fennel, star anise, and cinnamon; cook until fragrant, 1–2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer spices and chiles to a piece of cheesecloth; tie into a tight package. Add package to wok with reserved ribs, sugar, salt, and 6 cups water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook until ribs are very tender, 30–35 minutes. Drain ribs, discarding liquid and spice package, and dry completely with paper towels; set aside.

**4** Dry wok with paper towels and heat remaining 3 cups of canola oil to 375°. Working in 2 batches, fry

ribs until crisp, 6–8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to paper towels to drain; set aside. Discard all but ¼ cup oil; heat over high heat. Add minced garlic and ginger, and red and green chiles; cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add ribs and red chile oil; cook for 1 minute more. Serve with rice.

## Mapo Tofu

(Sichuan Tofu and Ground Beef in Red Chile Sauce)

SERVES 4

This spicy braise (pictured on page 78), garnished with mouth-numbing Sichuan peppercorns is Sichuan's most famous dish. See page 71 for information on hard-to-find ingredients.

- 1 14-oz. package firm tofu, drained and cut into 1" cubes
- Kosher salt, to taste
- ½ cup hong you (Sichuan red chile oil; see recipe far left, or use store-bought)
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 6" piece ginger, peeled and minced
- 6 oz. ground beef or pork
- 4 suan miao (Chinese chives, blossoms discarded) or scallions, thinly sliced, plus more for garnish
- 1 xiao mi la or red Thai chile, stemmed and minced
- 2½ tbsp. douban jiang (Chinese red chile bean paste)
- 1 tbsp. dou chi (Chinese fermented black soybeans)
- 1¼ cups chicken stock
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. light soy sauce
- ¼ cup cornstarch, mixed with 6 tbsp. water
- ¼ tsp. ground Sichuan pepper, for garnish
- Steamed rice, for serving

**1** Place tofu in a bowl with 3 cups boiling salted water; let sit 15 minutes. Drain and spread on paper towels to dry; set aside.

**2** Heat oil in a 14" flat-bottomed wok over medium-high heat. Add garlic and ginger; cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add beef; cook, stirring and breaking up meat, until browned, 4–6 minutes. Add chives, chiles, paste, and beans; cook, stirring, until chives are wilted, about 2 minutes. Add stock and tofu; bring to a boil, stirring gently, so as not to break up the tofu. Add sugar and soy; cook, stirring, until sugar is dissolved, about 1 minute. While stirring, slowly add cornstarch mixture; cook until sauce has thickened,





Sichuan noodle and pork shoulder  
soup (see [page 78](#) for a recipe)



about 2 minutes more. Transfer to a dish and garnish with chives and pepper. Serve with rice.

### ★ Ma Yi Shang Shu

(“Ants Climbing a Tree”)

SERVES 4

The name for this dish (pictured below) means “ants climbing a tree” because of the way the ground pork clings to the strands of glass noodles. See [page 71](#) for information on hard-to-find ingredients.

- ¼ lb. Chinese dried bean thread noodles
- 2 tsp. sesame oil
- 3 tbsp. canola oil
- 4 oz. ground pork
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 3” piece ginger, peeled and minced
- 3 tbsp. douban jiang (Chinese red chile bean paste)
- 2 tbsp. light soy sauce
- 3 tsp. Chinese rice wine
- 1½ cups chicken stock
- 2 tbsp. dark soy sauce
- 3 suan miao (Chinese chives, blossoms discarded) or scallions, thinly sliced

**1** Place noodles and 4 cups boiling water in a bowl; let sit until soft, about 4 minutes. Drain and toss noodles with sesame oil; set aside.

**2** Heat canola oil in a 14” flat-bottomed wok over medium-high heat. Add pork; cook, breaking up meat, until browned, 5–7 minutes. Add garlic and ginger; cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add paste, light soy, wine, and stock; bring to a boil. Add noodles; cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid is reduced by half, 8–10 minutes more, and stir in dark soy and chives.

- ¼ cup cornstarch
- ¼ cup douban jiang (Chinese red chile bean paste)
- 2 tbsp. dark soy sauce
- 2 tbsp. dry sherry
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. Chinkiang black vinegar
- Steamed rice, for serving

**1** Heat oil in a 14” flat-bottomed wok to 350°. Mix pork, oysters, half the garlic, along with chives, ginger, and egg white in a bowl. Form the mixture into thirteen 1½” balls; set aside. Mix cornstarch and ¼ cup water in a bowl. Working in 2 batches, dip meatballs in cornstarch mixture and add to oil; cook, turning as needed, until browned, 4–6 minutes. Using



Clockwise from bottom left: Sichuan tofu and ground beef in red chile sauce (see [page 76](#) for a recipe); “ants climbing a tree”; Sichuanese fried eggplant; sweet and sour pork and oyster meatballs (see this page for recipes).

a slotted spoon, transfer meatballs to paper towels to drain; set aside.

**2** Discard all but 3 tbsp. oil; return wok to medium-high heat. Add remaining garlic; cook until fragrant. Add paste, soy, sherry, sugar, and vinegar; bring to a boil and cook until sauce is thick, 5–7 minutes. Add meatballs; cook until hot, 2–3 minutes more. Serve with rice.

### Yu Xiang Pai Gu Mian

(Sichuan Noodle and Pork Shoulder Soup)

SERVES 6

Chengdu noodle shop owner Ma Yingjun shared his recipe for this dish of stewed pork over noodles

(pictured on [page 77](#)). See [page 71](#) for information on hard-to-find ingredients.

- 3 tbsp. canola oil
- 1½ lb. boneless pork shoulder, cut into 1” pieces
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 2” piece ginger, preferably young ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 3 tbsp. douban jiang (Chinese red chile bean paste)
- 3 tbsp. sugar
- 2 tbsp. light soy sauce
- ¼ cup Chinkiang black vinegar
- 3 tbsp. cornstarch, mixed with 3 tbsp. water
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 12 oz. thin Chinese wheat



noodles)

- 3 suan miao (Chinese chives, blossoms discarded) or scallions, thinly sliced, for garnish
- Asian pickled red chiles, drained and chopped, or sambal oelek; for garnish

**1** Heat oil in a 14” flat-bottomed wok over medium-high heat; add pork and cook, stirring until browned, 8–10 minutes. Add garlic, ginger, and paste; cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add sugar, soy, and vinegar; cook, stirring, until sugar dissolves. Add 6 cups water and

bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium and cook until pork is very tender, about 2 hours. Return to boil, add cornstarch mixture, and cook, stirring, until slightly thickened, 1–2 minutes. Keep soup warm.

**2** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook noodles until tender, 3–5 minutes. Drain and divide between 6 large serving bowls. Ladle soup over noodles and garnish with chives and pickled chiles.

### ★ Yu Xiang Qie Zi

(Sichuanese Fried Eggplant)

SERVES 2–4

Danny Bowien of Mission Chinese Food restaurant in New York shared his eggplant frying technique (see “Eggplant Essentials,” [page 87](#)), for this classic dish (pictured at left). See [page 71](#) for information on hard-to-find ingredients.

- 3 cups canola oil
- 4 small Japanese eggplants, sliced in half lengthwise, and cut in half crosswise
- 10 suan miao (Chinese chives, blossoms discarded) or scallions, thinly sliced, plus more for garnish
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 2” piece ginger, peeled and minced
- 2 tbsp. douban jiang (Chinese red chile bean paste)
- 2 tbsp. light soy sauce
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 2 tsp. Chinkiang black vinegar, for garnish
- 1 tsp. sesame oil, for garnish
- Steamed rice, for serving

**1** Heat oil in a 14” wok to 350°. Using a knife, score the eggplant flesh or skin in a crosshatch pattern, about ¼” deep. Submerge eggplant in ice water for 5 minutes. Drain eggplant and dry with paper towels; add to oil. Cook until slightly tender, 2–3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a bowl; cover with boiling water and let sit for 3 minutes. Drain and dry; set aside.

**2** Discard all but ¼ cup oil in the wok; return to medium-high heat. Add chives, garlic, and ginger; cook until soft, 3–5 minutes. Add chile bean paste, soy, and sugar; bring to a simmer. Add eggplant and cook for 2 minutes more. Transfer to a platter; garnish with chives, vinegar, and sesame oil. Serve with rice.



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# SUNSHINE STEW

THE MINGLING, MERGING AND EVER-EVOLVING INFLUENCES OF FLORIDA'S FOOD

**F**lorida's cuisine is flavored by the many ethnic groups who have come to these shores, looking for adventure, a better life or a new world, starting with Juan Ponce de Leon 500 years ago. Since then, Florida's food has evolved into a well-seasoned multicultural stew — vibrant, exotic and ever-changing, but never dull.

From gators and swamp cabbage to black beans and rice, the culinary history of Florida has taken many twists and turns. Born of resourcefulness, the state's culinary traditions began with Native Americans who knew how to live off the land — fishing, hunting and gathering berries and nuts.

When Juan Ponce de Leon arrived in 1513, he brought citrus, cattle and other exotic ingredients. The British and Spanish settlers came next, and while new crops were introduced to the Native Americans, they in turn taught the new arrivals useful skills and cooking techniques like baking in clay pots.

**“It's like living in a foreign country, in the best possible way.”**

— **Linda Bladholm**, author of *Latin and Caribbean Grocery Stores Demystified*

Other groups followed, including Africans, the French and the Minorcans, and Mediterranean immigrants who established a community south of St. Augustine called New Smyrna Beach, where you'll still find dishes made with their famed Datil peppers.

And then there's the influence of the South, known as Cracker cooking, after the descendants of the state's pioneer cattlemen in northern and Central Florida. Backwoods barbecue, catfish, and shrimp and grits have long been staples for home cooks, but now Southern cuisine has become haute and hot.

Yardbird Southern Table & Bar in South Beach, famous for its fried chicken, was named a semifinalist for a James Beard Foundation Award in 2012, along with its chef Jeff McInnis. Chef Rick Laughlin, chef of the AAA Five Diamond award-winning restaurant Salt at the Ritz-Carlton in Amelia Island, is known for his smoked shrimp and grits on a menu of adventurous dishes like mushroom ceviche with sausage agnolotti.

While much of the northern part of the state embraced its Southern roots, South Florida emerged as the prime destination for cold Northeasterners who opened Jewish delis and diners. Yet today, it's much easier to find black beans and rice than bagels and lox in Miami Beach.

Caribbean and Latin influences have become such an intrinsic part of life in South Florida that “it's like living in a foreign country, in the best possible way,” says Miami food

writer Linda Bladholm, author of *Latin and Caribbean Grocery Stores Demystified*.

While the Latin influence in South Florida is no secret, outsiders may not realize that before Cubans came to Miami, they were in Tampa, particularly in Ybor City's cigar-making factories. The authenticity of Cuban cuisine in Tampa versus Miami has led to a tongue-in-cheek rivalry, particularly when it comes to Tampa's Cuban sandwiches, which are made with ham, roast pork, Swiss cheese, pickles and a slather of yellow mustard plus salami, which was left off the Miami version.

But Latin cuisine is no longer limited to Cuban cuisine. In recent years, Central and South American immigrants have opened new restaurants. Floridians are now savoring dishes like Brazil's feijoada stew, Salvadoran pupusa patties and humitas, Chilean-style tamales.

Peruvian cuisine has become the sexy star of South American imports, certainly in South Florida but also on the west coast, in Tampa and Sarasota, moving beyond mom-and-pops to dining destinations. Acclaimed chef Darwin Santa Maria serves fine Peruvian cuisine in Sarasota, focusing on the bold flavors from the Amazon in his restaurant and brewery, Darwin's on 4th. Yet, he's turned to a Florida farmer to grow the spicy aji charapita peppers that are usually found in the jungles of Peru.

Subtropical fruits, but also citrus, play a starring role in the aromatic cuisines from Haitians, Jamaicans and West Indians. Island spices and hot sauces are found in fusion cooking or in the humble nooks where local cooks prepare jerk chicken, curried goat, and ackee and saltfish.

Asian influences are so widespread that sushi chefs are slicing and dicing in Publix supermarkets. More recently, we've discovered Vietnam's fresh, summery dishes, including pho, the beloved beef-noodle soup.

In 1998, chef Norman Van Aken wrote a book called *Feast of Sunlight* about the wave of fusion, melding multi-ethnic ingredients and local foods. Considering that Christopher Columbus changed the way our cuisine evolved, he dubbed this fusion “New World Cuisine.” The term is more accurate than ever, says Van Aken, director of restaurants at the Miami Culinary Institute and chef-owner of Norman's at the Ritz-Carlton, Grande Lakes, Orlando.

“The immigration patterns that launched the new vocabularies and methodologies of cooking were in infancy compared to today,” he says. “The broadening and deepening immigrant population adds more intrigue to our menus daily. Just today, I was reading about a jibarito sandwich in which caramelized plantains take the place of bread. These riffs will go on for a long time.”

Despite the many changes in Florida's cuisine, its true flavor still comes back to the land, the sea, the fruit — all the ingredients that make so many cultures feel at home.

PREVIOUS: DEBBIE SNOW; CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ZACH STOVALL (2), ISTOCKPHOTO, SHUTTERSTOCK





# sweet TARTS

PUCKER UP AND SAVOR A BITE OF FLORIDA'S FAMED KEY LIME PIE

**D**esignated the official pie of the state in 2006, Key lime pie tingles the taste buds with a cool tart-sweetness, a must-have dessert during any visit to Florida. Native to Southeast Asia, the Key lime was likely brought by traders to the Mediterranean, and then to the Caribbean and Mexico by Spaniards in the 1500s. It was botanist Henry Perrine who reportedly cultivated the limes in the Florida Keys in the 1930s, but the pie came later. Without much fresh milk (there weren't many cows in the Keys) and no refrigeration, it took the invention of condensed milk by Gail Borden in 1856 for a cook to come up with the idea of mixing the canned milk and Key lime juice.

The basic pie is made with but a few humble ingredients — condensed milk, Key lime juice and sugar. Beyond that, though, recipes are open to interpretation. While purists still debate the authenticity of meringue versus whipped-cream topping, pastry or graham-cracker crust, and using egg yolks or going eggless, contemporary cooks are busy riffing on the original, tossing in ingredients such as pumpkin or pineapple.

What everyone agrees on is that the filling should be a pale yellow. No Key lime pie should be neon green. And don't confuse Key limes, which are about the size of a golf ball, with bigger, greener Persian limes. No one seems to care that Key lime juice is now imported from Mexico or Central America, because commercial Key lime crops were destroyed during the hurricane of 1926. And no matter that some odd places — even Brooklyn — are hawking authentic Key lime pie. You'll find some of the best versions at these spots, which all offer a true taste of Florida.

## **Kermit's Key West Key Lime Shoppe**

Don't let his kelly-green chef's hat fool you. Kermit Carpenter makes a classic pie with real Key lime juice, so it has a creamy yellow filling, graham cracker-crust and tufts of whipped cream, a recipe he learned from his grandmother 20 years ago. "It should make you pucker up a bit," says the Key lime king, whose pies have been praised on the Food Network.

Carpenter also sells more than 100 items, including olive

oil, salad dressing, mustard sauce, jelly beans and tea — all with Key lime juice as an ingredient — in his two shops in the southernmost city. **keylimeshop.com**

## **Key West Key Lime Co.**

The Key lime pie made by Jim Brush and Alison Sloat's company clinched the American Pie Council's National Pie Championship in 2008 and 2009, but it probably got the most attention when chef Bobby Flay challenged the Keys' pie makers to a throwdown in 2011. The judges liked Flay's version best, Brush says, though he still maintains Flay's addition of coconut rum in the topping may have unduly helped sway the judges.

The Key West Key Lime Co. doesn't use eggs in its pies, which are sold in Big Pine Key and Key West, so the pies aren't baked like many versions. Brush insists eggs weren't used in the original pies, though like most other aspects of pie lore, it's debated. What's clear, Brush says, is that when travelers come to Florida, especially the Keys, "they come for sun, conch fritters and the most sought-after dessert — Key lime pie." **keywestkeylimepieco.com**

## **Bob Roth's New River Grove**

Soon after they opened their citrus groves in Davie in 1964, Bob Roth's resourceful wife, Terry, came up with a recipe for her own Key lime pie and began selling it in their shop. Forty-four years later, it's still a hit. Terry died in 2002, but the family has continued making her pie, with its graham-cracker crust, swirls of whipped cream and just enough tartness to make your lips curl in pleasure.

The family also offers versions like orange and mango Key lime pie, along with smoothies and homemade fudge. The Roths brought their Key lime pie to Tallahassee in 1994 so legislators could sample it during discussions about picking a state pie. (The pecan pie was its chief rival). Twelve years later, the Roths' efforts came to fruition, and New River Groves took part in the 2006 ceremony at the state capital. **newrivergroves.com**





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# LOCALS ONLY

FLORIDA'S ONE-OF-A-KIND INGREDIENTS

WE FLORIDIANS LOVE TO BRAG ABOUT PICKING BIG JUICY ORANGES AND GRAPEFRUITS RIGHT FROM OUR BACKYARD TREES, PARTICULARLY IF WE'RE CALLING FRIENDS AND RELATIVES IN SOME COLD, MISERABLE PLACE. WHAT, AFTER ALL, IS MORE FLORIDIAN THAN A FRESH-SQUEEZED GLASS OF ORANGE JUICE? ACTUALLY, A LOT. FROM THE RIVERBANKS OF NORTHERN FLORIDA TO THE FARMS OF CENTRAL FLORIDA AND THE AQUA WATERS OF THE KEYS, THE SUNSHINE STATE IS THE ONLY SOURCE, OR ONE OF THE FEW SOURCES, FOR MANY SPECIAL FOODS. HERE'S A SAMPLE OF THE LOCAL INGREDIENTS ON FLORIDA'S PLATE.



## Stone Crabs

Stop by legendary Joe's Stone Crab to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Miami Beach restaurant, and of course indulge in claws as pink as the sunset. Stone crabs — beloved for their sweet, white claw meat — are in season from mid-October to mid-May. And they're renewable: Trappers twist off one claw and return the crab to the sea, where the creature can defend and feed itself with one claw until the missing one regenerates. Try them steamed or boiled, cracked and chilled.

## Tupelo Honey

In 1971, Van Morrison was moved to croon this comparison: "She's as sweet as tupelo honey." A quarter-century later, Peter Fonda starred in the film *Ulee's Gold* as a hard-working beekeeper who harvested the prized honey from the blossoms of the white tupelo trees found in the swamps along the Apalachicola, Choctawhatchee and Ochlockonee rivers in Northwest Florida. But it was Clyde Owen, founder of Tupelo Honey<sup>3</sup>, based in the small city of Wakulla Station, who nearly 30 years ago called the expensive amber nectar the "Cadillac of all honey," for good reason.

"My father grew up in the day when everyone wanted a Cadillac and it was top of the line, and he applied that to the honey," says Matthew Owen, who helps sell products for the family honey business. "Tupelo honey is different; it's sweeter than most honey, there's only a limited amount of it, and this is the only area of the world where tupelo trees all grow in one spot."

To celebrate the honey, devotees head to the mossy oaks of Lake Alice in Wewahatchka each year for the Annual Tupelo Honey Festival, so stop by on May 18 for a taste.

## Mayhaw Berries

Hoot Gibson remembers going to the banks of the Choctawhatchee river in northern Florida as a boy, carrying an "ol' wore-out sheet" to spread across the water. He'd then scoop up the bright red berries that fell off the hawthorn trees in May (hence the name mayhaw) on the river's edge and turn them over to his mom, who would create a delectable wild jelly.

While it looks like a crabapple, the fruit's sweet tartness "doesn't taste like any other jelly," says Gibson, 89, who now sells jars of mayhaw jelly, tupelo honey and satsuma oranges from the garage of his Tallahassee home a few hours a day.

Today, mayhaws are more accessible and hawthorn trees are growing in the cultivated fields of commercial orchards. Try the lovely jelly slathered with butter on biscuits.

## Conch

The unattractive, footlike muscle of the conch stars in myriad dishes, whether raw in ceviche or salad, or dressed up in fritters and spicy chowder. The key to a great conch dish is a

cook who knows how to soften the texture of the meat properly, which can be chewy.

Conch is now popular throughout the state, but if you're in Key West (nicknamed the Conch Republic), order some of the best, freshly made conch fritters you'll ever have and find a place to watch the sun go down.



## Kumquats

Kumquat Growers Inc. in Dade City has been growing the "little gold gem" since 1912. You can eat the thin, sweet peel, while the fruit itself bursts with a tartness that makes your taste buds dance. Nearby St. Joseph calls itself the "kumquat capital of the world" thanks to a settler who discovered the tree, originally from Asia, working in a nursery in the late 1800s. He planted it in his yard and later shared the fruit with friends. At the annual Kumquat Festival in Dade City held in January, you can try everything from kumquat cookies and pies to ice cream, marmalade and barbecue sauce.

## Hearts of Palm

They may be called hearts of palm in a fancy restaurant, but in a Cracker kitchen, you're eating swamp cabbage. In fact, the small town of LaBelle, just east of Fort Myers on the Caloosahatchee River, celebrates the delicacy, which looks a little like white asparagus, every year with its Swamp Cabbage Festival.

Hearts of palm comes from the "terminal bud" or "heart" of the sabal palm, the state tree of Florida. Without the buds, the palm isn't able to replace its old leaves and eventually dies. Hearts of palm became so popular that the state had to protect the tree from the "millionaire's salad." Most hearts of palm seen on menus today come from trees in Central and South America, and cooks buy it canned.

## Florida Lobster

There are two Florida lobster seasons — a mini two-day season in July and the regular eight-month lobster season from August 6 to March 31 — but you're more likely to find Maine lobster on a local menu than one caught in the warm waters of South Florida. Restaurant owners point to lack of availability and demand, though the meat of the Florida lobster, all found in the tail, is sweet and tender. Also called the spiny or rock lobster, the Florida version lacks claws and has a long, spiny antennae.





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IN THE SAVEUR

# KITCHEN

Discoveries and Techniques from Our Favorite Room in the House » Edited by Todd Coleman



## Eggplant Essentials

One chef's technique for making perfect fried eggplant

**S**ICHUAN-STYLE fried eggplant, firm yet creamy and bursting with flavor, is truly exquisite (see a recipe on [page 78](#)), but cooking it can be a challenge—eggplant's porous flesh soaks up oil like a sponge and can quickly go from silky to sodden. So we asked Danny Bowien, chef-owner of the Mission Chinese Food restaurants in New York and San Francisco, whose fried Japanese eggplant is exemplary, to share his technique. Here's what we learned: First, after quartering the eggplant, score a crosshatch pattern on the skin or the flesh side. This creates more surface area for faster cooking, so the oil doesn't have time to seep into the vegetable. Next, soak the eggplant in ice-cold water: The chill shocks the surface of the vegetable and fills tiny air pockets between the cells, preventing the oil from entering them. After a five-minute bath, pat the eggplant completely dry with a paper towel so the hot oil doesn't spatter during frying. Finally, make sure that your frying oil is at least 350 degrees—at that high temperature, the eggplant will cook without absorbing oil. Deep-fry it for about two to three minutes, just until the cut side is soft and golden and the skin side is slightly blistered. Briefly soak the slices in a bowl of just-boiled water to rinse off any excess oil. Once drained and completely dried, it can be simmered in sauce, which it will readily absorb, yielding eggplant that is rich in flavor, not in oil. —*Kellie Evans*



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# Fearless Frying

**W**HILE TESTING THE DONUT recipes for this issue, we learned that control over oil temperature is of the utmost importance when it comes to deep-frying. Electric deep fryers, especially those that can be programmed to reach and hold specific temperatures, are well-designed for the task, and with their enclosed heating elements and tight-fitting lids, they're a safer, less messy alternative to stove-top frying. (Always double-check oil temperatures with your own thermometer, however, as even slight discrepancies can mean the difference between a fluffy donut and a soggy one.) Here are nine models that, in our experience, turn out perfectly cooked donuts every time. —*Judy Haubert*



## Breville Deep Fryer

\$150; [williams-sonoma.com](http://williams-sonoma.com)

With a narrow brushed-steel body and tucked-in handle for easy storage, this deep fryer is among the most thoughtfully designed. The sturdy adjustable basket and deep well for oil result in spatter-proof frying.



## Presto FryDaddy Electric Deep Fryer

\$25; [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

This inexpensive fryer is the most pared down of the bunch but makes up for its lack of bells and whistles with its dependability. It holds a steady temperature of 375 degrees and comes with a slotted spoon rather than a fry basket for easy donut retrieval. Caveat emptor—you'll need your own timer and thermometer.

## Stainless Steel 1.8 Liter Deep Fryer by Emeril from T-fal

\$118; [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

This petite dishwasher-safe fryer is uniquely equipped with a built-in oil filtration and storage system. After frying, the machine automatically removes impurities from the oil by straining it into a drawer until it's ready to be used again.



## Krups High Performance Fryer

\$300; [williams-sonoma.com](http://williams-sonoma.com)

Able to hold almost five liters of oil, this is the highest volume fryer we tested. Plus, its timer and thermostat controls are intuitive, the stainless-steel oil chamber has handles for easy removal, and a window on the lid gives a complete view of donuts as they fry.





### Kenmore Deep Fryer with Dual Frying Baskets

\$70; [kenmore.com](http://kenmore.com)

This four-quart fryer is our pick for multitasking: It has two nesting baskets, which aren't strictly necessary when frying donuts but can conceivably be put to good use when frying other foods—chicken fingers and french fries, for instance—at the same time.



### DeLonghi Stainless Steel Deep Fryer

\$130; [shopdelonghi.com](http://shopdelonghi.com)

With thermometer controls ranging from 248 to 374 degrees, this fryer has a wider than average temperature span, making it ideal for an array of foods beyond donuts. It's the only model we tested with an outside drainage valve for no-mess oil removal, and its large digital display makes it easy to program fry settings.



### Secura 4.2-Liter Deep Fryer

\$60; [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

Since most of our donut recipes call for frying in two inches of oil, the low-slung design of the Secura fits our needs perfectly. The 11-by-10-inch interior provides a maximum amount of oil surface, and its shallow basket can comfortably fit up to five donuts at a time, more than any other model we tested.



### Cuisinart Mini Deep Fryer

\$50; [cuisinartwebstore.com](http://cuisinartwebstore.com)

About the size of a standard two-slot toaster, this fryer is perfect for tiny kitchens. It holds just one liter of oil but can still comfortably fry two three-inch donuts at a time, and the basket has a detachable handle, making it easy to store.

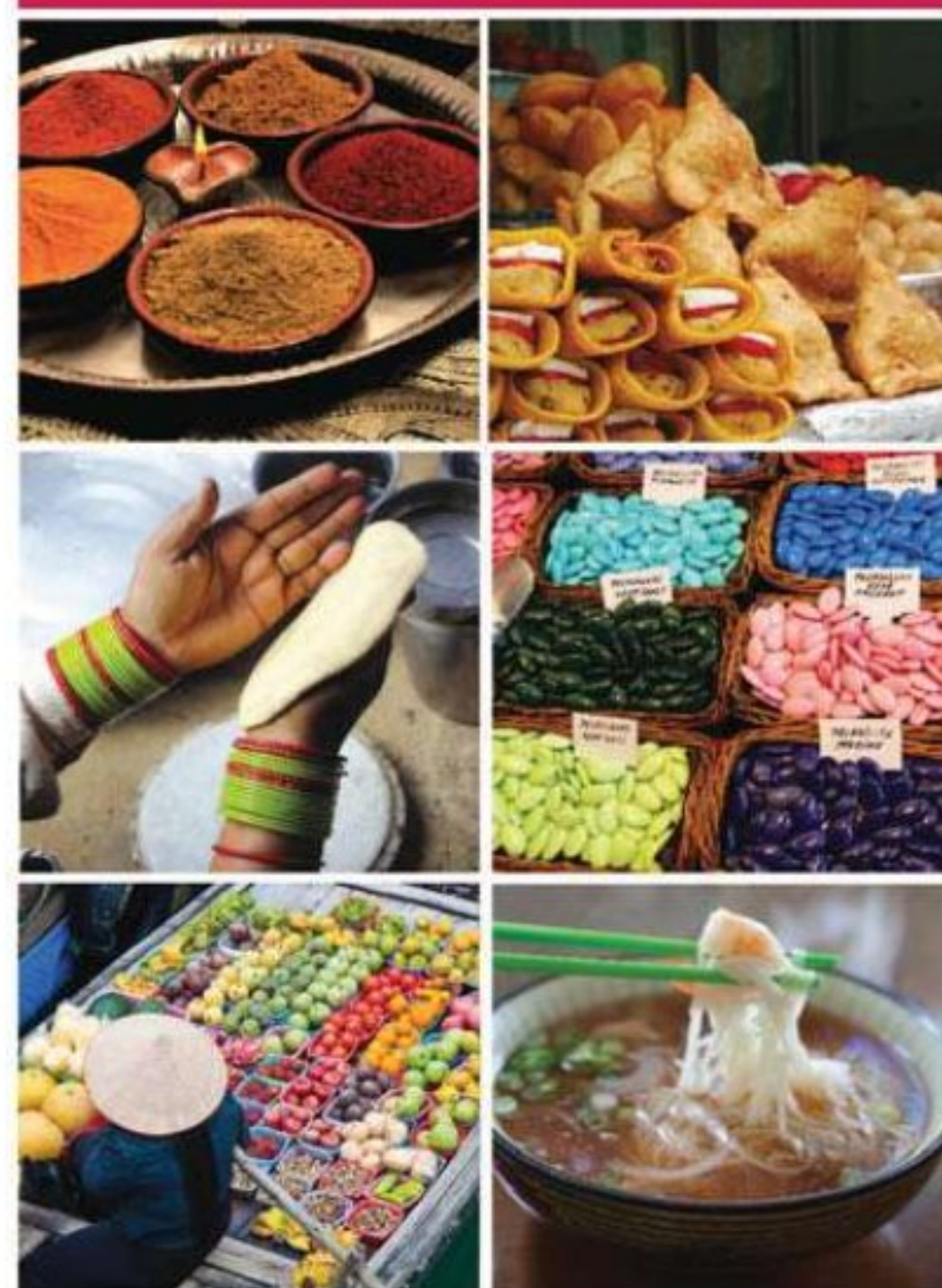
### Waring Pro Professional Deep Fryer

\$100; [waringwebstore.com](http://waringwebstore.com)

This fryer is the one we turned to most often in our donut testing. Dependable and easy to assemble, the Waring embodies function and utility: A built-in spout makes it easy to pour out used oil, and the non-stick interior makes cleanup a cinch.



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# The Making of a Dunkin' Donut

Rick Golden, Manager of Donut Excellence at the Dunkin' Donuts test kitchen in Canton, Massachusetts, develops new flavors for the company, making up to 1,200 donuts a day in the process. We spoke with him about his unusual job and its delicious fringe benefits. —*Felicia Campbell*

**Q: What exactly happens in the test kitchen?**

**A:** We're responsible for testing recipes for each of the hundreds of donut varieties that Dunkin' Donuts makes. We also test equipment—everything that touches the donut has to come through our lab first. And we go into the field to tweak recipes for specific franchisees. In Colorado, for example, we had to make some adjustments so that the donuts would come out right at 5,280 feet above sea level.

**Q: How long does it take to develop the recipe for a new donut?**

**A:** Generally it takes about nine months. We usually build on existing donuts and don't mess with the basic cooking process. But a few years ago we decided we wanted a chocolate yeast donut. No other commercial donut maker in the country was making them. It turned out there was a good reason for that: It's really hard! Cocoa powder absorbs more water than flour, creating havoc when you're trying to proof the dough. We figured it out and released a line of yeast-raised chocolate donuts, including the Reverse Boston Kreme, chocolate creme inside a chocolate yeast shell, topped with vanilla icing. The entire process, from concept to release, took four years.



**Q: What's the most surprising donut you've encountered?**

**A:** Our international stores customize the donuts to their local market. There's a Chinese Pork Floss Donut out there—a glazed donut rolled in shredded dried pork.

**Q: What's the key to making an excellent donut?**

**A:** It's really important to carefully measure ingredients and adhere to exact temperatures and cooking times. And the oil is very important: Make sure you use oil of the highest quality; it's a big part

of a donut's anatomy after all.

**Q: Who's testing donuts with you?**

**A:** There are about 20 of us: James Beard-nominated chefs, school-of-hard-knocks bakers, and food technologists. We share the kitchen with groups working on savory sandwiches, beverages, muffins, and bagels. Often we'll collaborate. Lately, I've been talking to the coffee team.

**Q: About a coffee-flavored donut?**

**A:** You'll have to wait four years to find out.

## CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR 101

Where would donuts be without confectioners' sugar? Also known as powdered sugar, the ingredient forms the base of countless enticing glazes (see [page 64](#) for recipes), and on its own is an essential topping for countless donuts around the world. Professional grades of powdered sugar, made by grinding granulated sugar, which is then sorted according to the size of the ground sugar particles, range from 2x, the coarsest, to superfine 14x. The most widely available grade, 10x, is the best for donut glazes—the sugar is fine enough to dissolve completely and quickly in liquid, yielding flawless glazes that dry fast. Most powdered sugars include a small amount of starch (usually cornstarch), which acts as a stabilizer and anticaking agent. This helps the sugar stay clump-free—especially useful for achieving even sprinkling on powdered donuts. While confectioners' sugar is widely available in supermarkets, you can also make it at home: Combine one-half cup granulated sugar and three-quarters teaspoon cornstarch in a spice or coffee grinder. Blend on high speed for about one minute until the mixture is ground to a very fine powder. Sift through a fine-mesh strainer and store in an airtight container. Makes three-quarters cup. —*Judy Haubert*

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# THE PANTRY

## A Guide to Resources

*In producing the stories for this issue, we discovered ingredients and information too good to keep to ourselves. Please feel free to raid our pantry!*

BY KELLIE EVANS

### Fare

Sample Russian banya food at **South-Western Bathhouse and Tea Room**, 2200 Dundas Street East, Mississauga, Ontario (289/232-6088; banya.ca). To find **Brewery Ommegang's Art of Darkness** ale, go to ommegang.com. To visit Kyoto, Japan's **Nishiki Market**, go to kyoto.travel. Visit the **Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive** at the University of Michigan's William L. Clements Library, 909 South University Avenue, Ann Arbor (734/764-2347). Order **Eat Drink Delta** (University of Georgia Press, 2013) from Amazon (\$13.50; amazon.com).

### Essay

To view more of Ellen Silverman's photographs of **Havana kitchens**, go to ellensilverman.com.

### Classic

To prepare the *bacheofe* recipe (see [page 34](#)), purchase an **Emile Henry Flame Oval Dutch Oven** (\$240 for a 6.3-qt. pot; 302/326 4800; emilehenryusa.com).

### Sichuan

To make the recipes (see [pages 76–78](#)), buy **Shaohsing rice wine**, **Lee Kum Kee chile bean sauce** (*touban djan*), and **Lee Kum Kee dark soy sauce** (*lao chou*) from Amazon (\$22.49 for two 750-ml bottles; \$5.46 for a 13-oz. jar; \$6.77 for a 16.9-oz. bottle); **Lee Kum Kee chiu chow oil** (similar to *hong you*) from asianfoodgrocer.com (\$4.48 for a 7.2-oz. jar; 888/482-2742); **Koon Chun black vinegar** and **Sichuan peppercorns** from Kalustyan's (\$12.99 for a 600-ml bottle; \$12.99 for a 3-oz. pack; 800/352-3451; kalustyans.com); **fermented black beans** (*dou chi*) from Bonanza (\$9.99 for a 16-oz. bag; bonanza.com); **Szechuan sweet bean paste** (*tian mian jiang*) from asiansupermarket365.com (\$3.99 for a 16-oz. can; 888/822-8910); **light soy sauce** (*sheng chou*), **dried mung bean noodles** (*ma yi shang shu*), and **Annie Chun's chow mein noodles** (*mian xian*) are at Whole Foods Markets across the country (wholefoods.com).

### Donuts

Seek out our **50 favorite donut shops**. In Arizona, **Le Cave's** is at 1219 S. Sixth Avenue, Tucson (520/624-2561), and **Vantastic Donuts & Bagels** is at 4729 West Olive Avenue, Glendale 623/435-2024. In California, **Bob's Donut & Pastry Shop** is at 1621 Polk Street, San Francisco (415/776-3141); **Bouchon Bakery** is at 6528 Washington Street, Yountville (707/944-2253); **Donut Man** is at 915 E. Route 66, Glendora (626/335-9111); **Doughnut Hut** is at 2025 West Magnolia Boulevard, Burbank (818/840-8718); **Dynamo Donuts** is at 2760 24th Street, San Francisco (415/920-1978); **Earl's Donuts** is at 20429 Devonshire Street, Chatsworth (818/341-2869); **Marie's Donuts** is at 2950 Freeport Boulevard, Sacramento (916/444-5245); and **Stan's Doughnuts** is at 10948 Weyburn Avenue, Westwood Village (310/208-8660). In Connecticut, **Dottie's Diner** is at 740 Main Street South, Woodbury (203/263-2545); **Neil's Donuts and Bake Shop** is at 83 N. Turnpike Road, Wallingford (203/269-4255); and **Orangeside Luncheonette** is at 135 Orange Street, New Haven (203/773-1000). In Georgia, **Sublime Doughnuts** is at 535 10th Street Northwest, Atlanta (404/897-1801). In Illinois, **Dat Donut** is at 8249 S. Cottage Grove Avenue, Chicago (773/723-1002); **The Doughnut Vault** is at 400-1/2 North Franklin Street, Chicago; and **Old Fashioned Donuts** is at 11248 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago (773/995-7420). In Kentucky, **Nord's Bakery** is at 2118 S. Preston Street, Louisville (502/634-0931). In Louisiana, **Café du Monde** is at 813 Decatur Street, New Orleans (504/587-0831); **Meche's Donut King** is at 125 Courthouse Street, Breaux Bridge (337/332-3577); and **Morning Call Coffee Stand** is at 3325 Severn Avenue, Metairie (504/885-4068). In Maine, **Congdon's Doughnuts** is at 1090 Post Road, Wells (207/646-4219), and **Frosty's Donuts** is at 54 Maine Street, Brunswick (207/729-4258). In Maryland, **Fractured Prune** is at 2808 Philadelphia Avenue, Ocean City (410/289-1134). In Massachusetts, **Betty Ann Food Shop** is at 565 Bennington Street, East Boston (617/567-1479); **Donut Dip** is at 648 N. Main Street, East Longmeadow (413/736-2224); **Kane's Donuts** is at 120 Lincoln Avenue, Saugus (781/233-8499); and **Marty's Donut Land** is at 8 Central Street, Ipswich (978/356-4580). In Michigan, **Cops & Doughnuts** is at 521 N. McEwan Street, Clare (989/386-2241); **Friske Orchards** is at 10743 N. U.S. 31, Atwood (231/599-2604); and **Sweetwater's Donut Mill** has multiple locations

(sweetwatersdonuts.com). In Minnesota, **Bloedow Bakery** is at 451 Sixth Street, Winona (507/452-3682) and **Lindstrom Bakery** is at 12830 Lake Boulevard, Lindstrom (651/257-1374). In Missouri, **Donut Stop** is at 1101 Lemay Ferry Road, St. Louis (314/631-3333). In New York, **Cupcake Cafe** is at 545 Ninth Avenue, New York City (212/465-1530); **Doughnut Plant** has multiple locations (doughnut-plant.com); and **Peter Pan Donut & Pastry Shop** is at 727 Manhattan Avenue, Brooklyn (718/389-3676). In Nevada, **Ronald's Donuts** is at 4600 W. Spring Mountain Road, Las Vegas (702/873-1032). In North Carolina, **Britt's Donuts** is at 11 N. Carolina Beach Avenue, Carolina Beach. In Ohio, **Bill's Donut Shop** is at 268 N. Main Street, Centerville (937/433-0002). In Oregon, **Annie's Donut Shop** is at 3449 NE 72nd Avenue, Portland (503/284-2752); and **Voodoo Doughnuts** is at 22 SW Third Avenue, Portland (503/241-4704). In Pennsylvania, **Federal Donuts** has multiple locations (federaldonuts.com). In Rhode Island, **Allie's Donuts** is at 3661 Quaker Lane, North Kingstown (401/295-8036). In Texas, **Gourdough's** is at 1503 S. First Street, Austin (512/707-1050); and **Round Rock Donuts** is at 106 W. Liberty Street, Round Rock (512/255-3629). In Vermont, **Mrs. Murphy's Donuts** is at 374 Depot Street, Manchester Center (802/362-1874); and **P & H Truck Stop** is at 2886 U.S. 302, Newbury (802/429-2141). In Virginia, **Do-Nut Dinette** is at 1917 Colley Avenue, Norfolk (757/625-0061). In Washington, **Top Pot Doughnuts** is at 2124 Fifth Avenue, Seattle (206/728-1966). When making donuts, use a **Maverick Digital Oil & Candy Thermometer** (Amazon, \$22.59); a 3" **Rochow Donut Cutter** (\$47.85; 585/244-1120; rochowcutters.com); a **Chicago Metallic Wire Cooling Rack** (\$11.50; 800/238.2253; chicagometallicbakeware.com); **Saibashi Cooking Chopsticks** (30¢ a pair, 201/806-1827; mtckitchen.com); a **Jacob Bromwell All-American Sifter** (\$44.99; jacobbromwell.com); a **Wilton Donut Pan** (\$9.99; 888/373-4588; wilton.com); and a **Medu Vada Maker** (\$24.99; 800/352-3451; kalustyans.com). To make the New England cider donuts ([page 54](#)), use **whole wheat graham flour**, available from Bob's Red Mill (\$2.59 for a 24-oz. bag; 503/654-3215; bobsredmill.com). To make the *gulab jamun* recipe ([page 60](#)), use **ghee**, available from Dr. Vita (\$6.88 for a 13-oz. jar; 800/211-4188; drvita.com). To make the matcha green tea glaze recipe ([page 64](#)), buy **matcha green tea powder** from nuts.com (\$18.99 for an 8-oz. bag; 800/558-6887).



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# SAVEUR MENU

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From top to bottom: SAVEUR Holiday Potluck Chefs; Editor in Chief James Oseland with his husband Daniel; Chef Cesare Casella; Chef Fabio Viviani; Merluza Ceviche by Host Chef Sisha Ortúzar (Riverpark, NYC)





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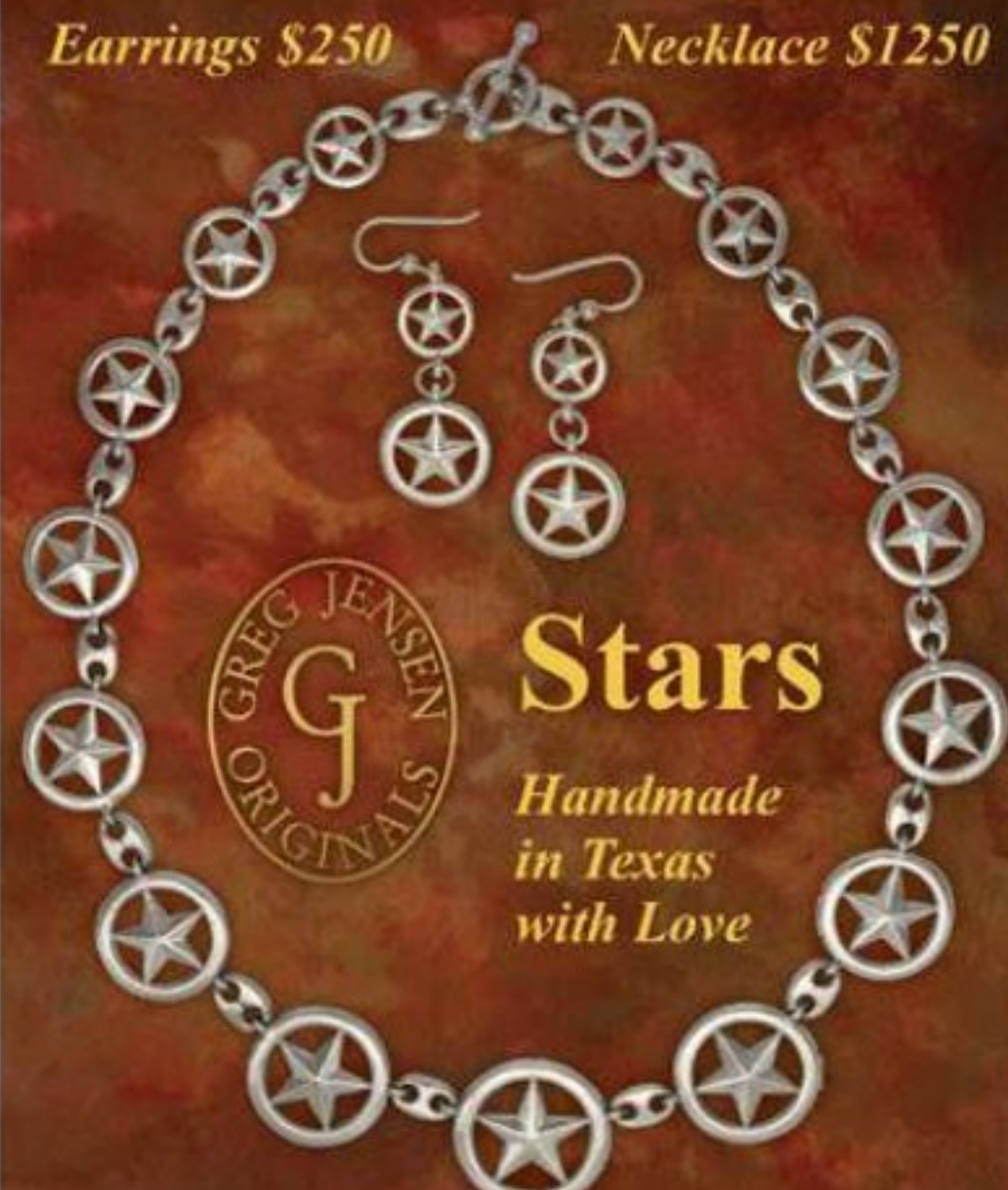
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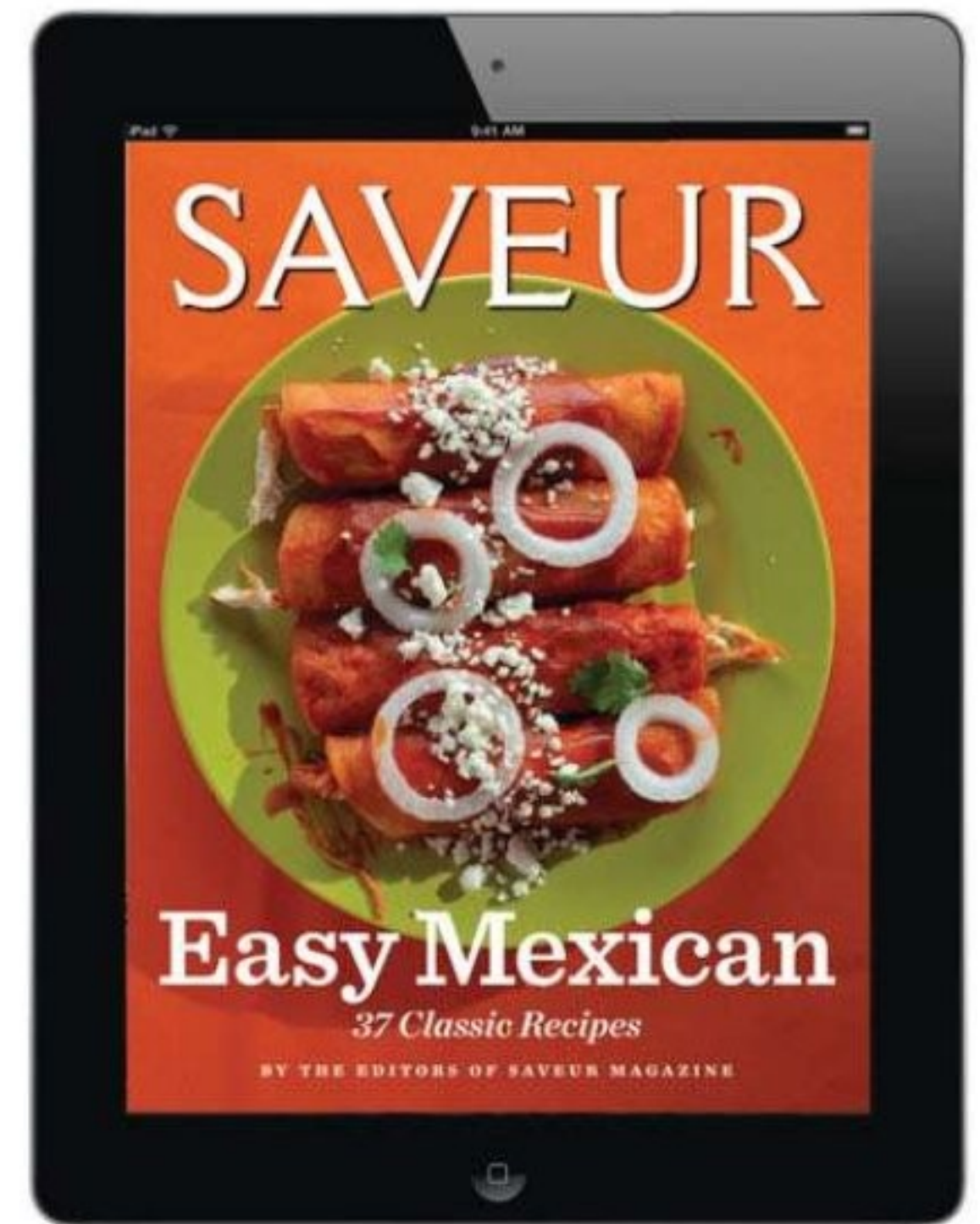
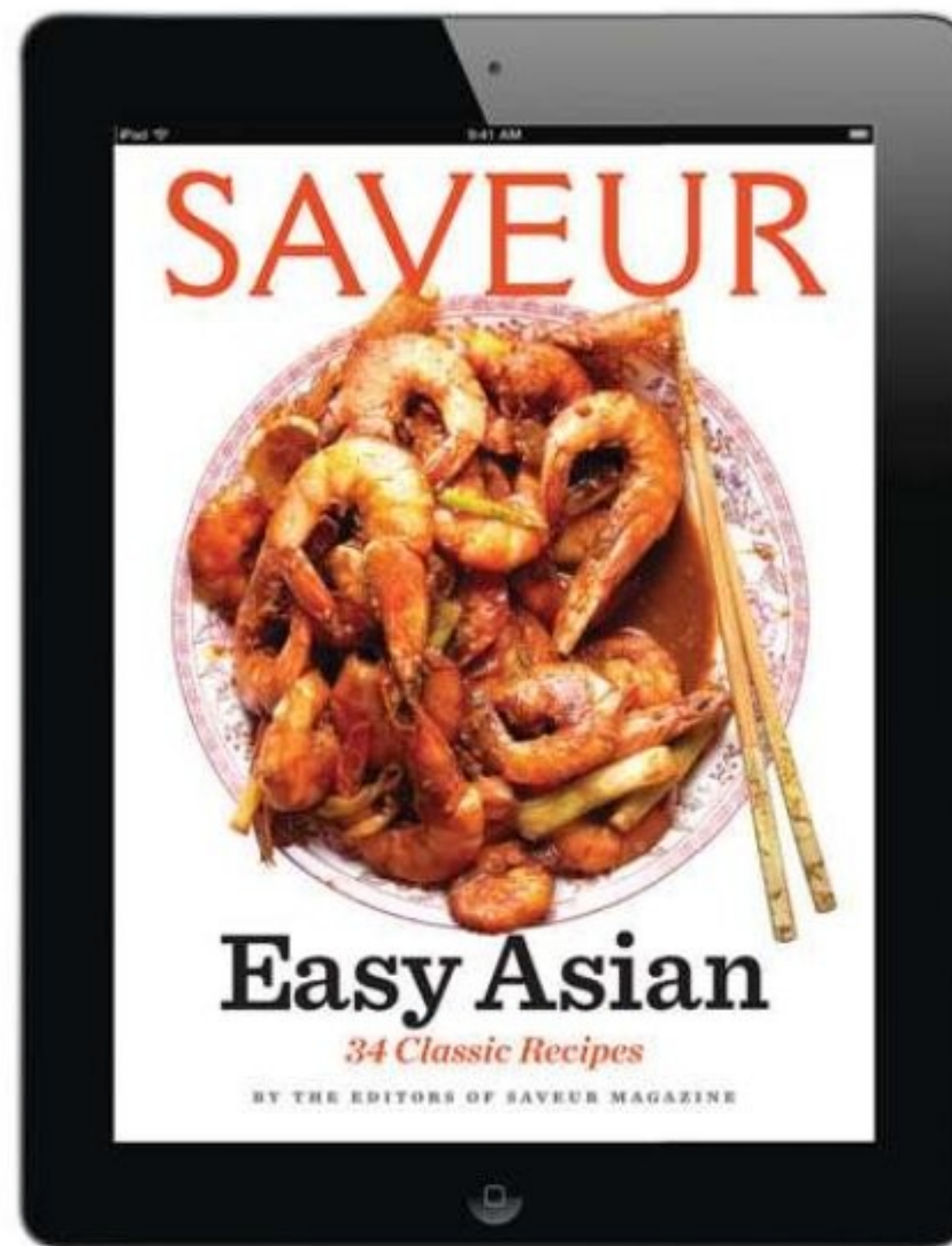
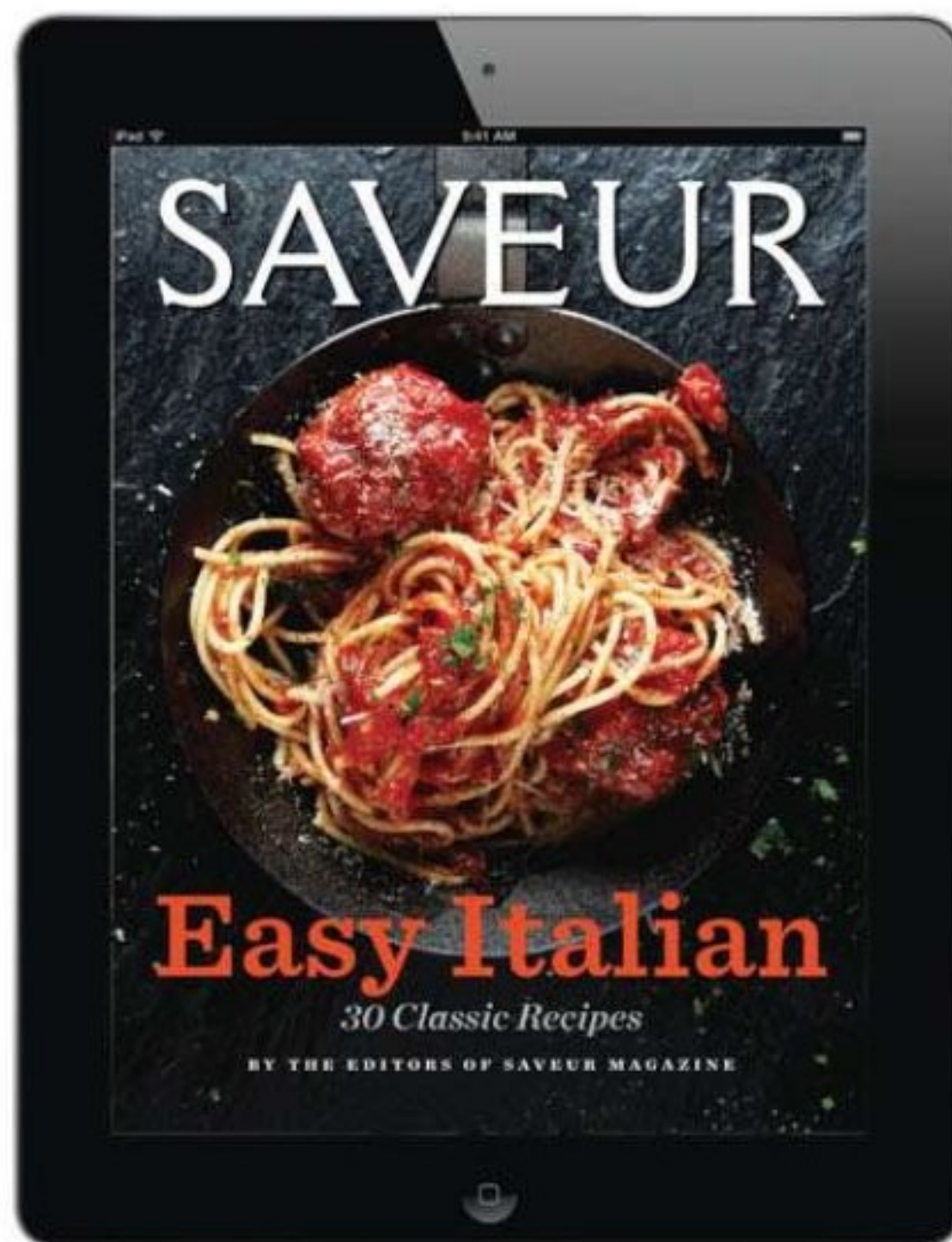


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